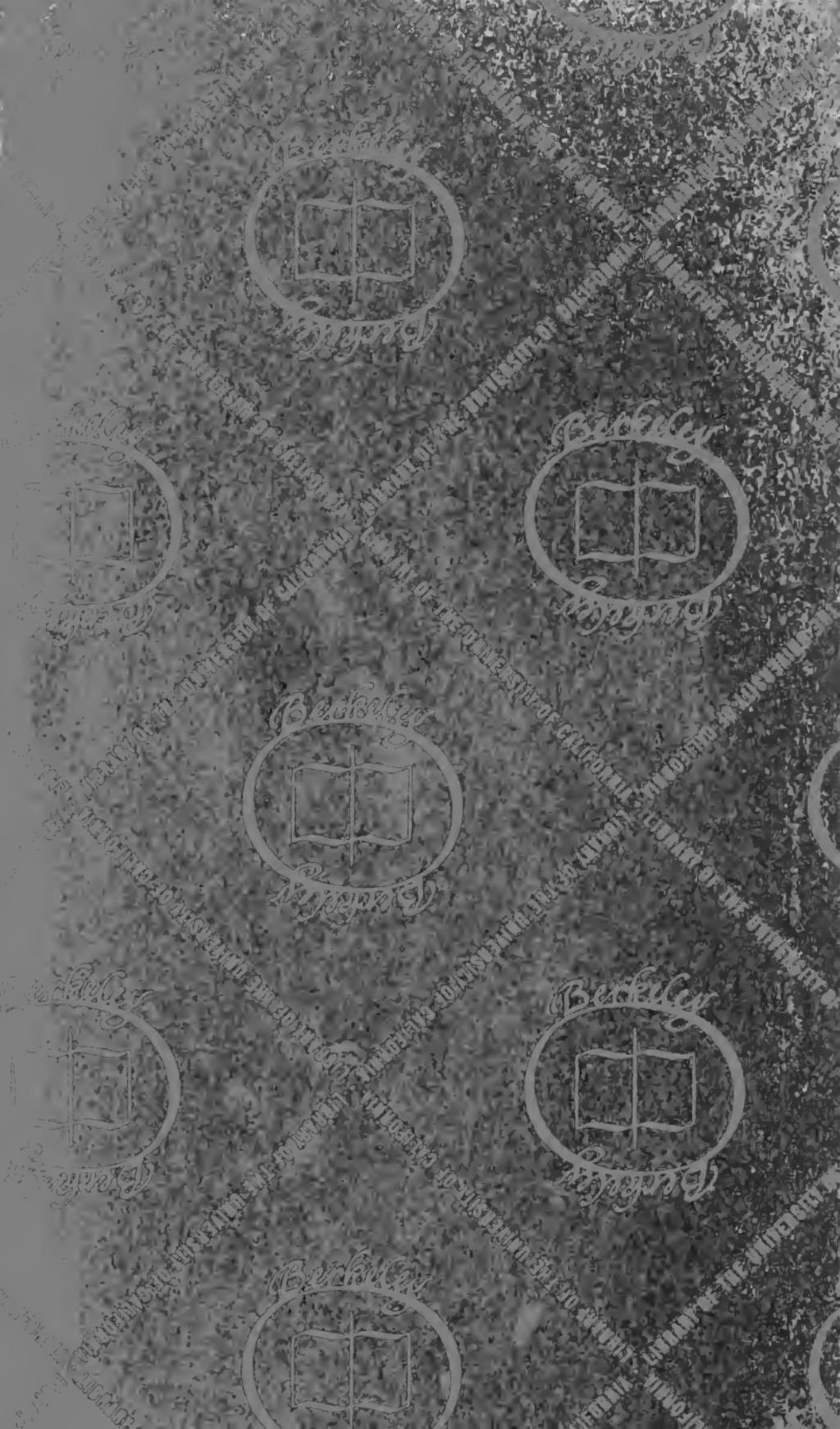


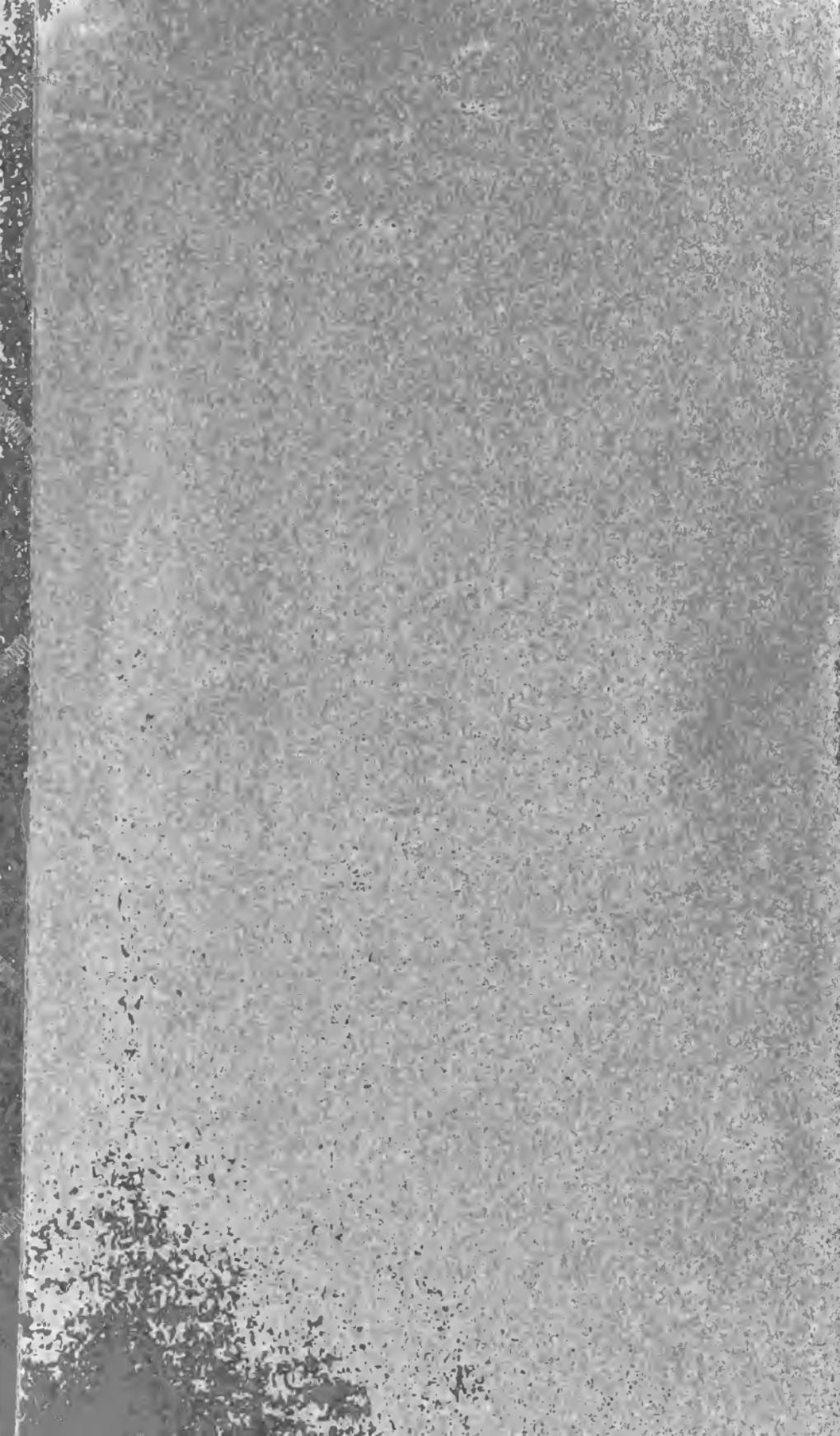




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ROBERT GANTHONY.



RANDOM. RECOLLECTIONS

BY

ROBERT GANTHONY

Author of "*A Brace of Partridges*;" "*Spoffins*;"
"*Bunkum Entertainments*;" "*Sambo's
Serenade*," etc., etc.

London

HENRY J. DRANE
SALISBURY HOUSE
SALISBURY SQUARE, FLEET STREET, E.C.

1899.

GIFT

PN2598
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TO
MY BEST FRIEND,

The companion of my solitude, who has never for one instant deserted me in time of sickness nor trouble; who has seemed to know my every thought and wish before I uttered them, whose sincerity I have never doubted, as he could not deceive me even though he tried,

This Book is Dedicated,

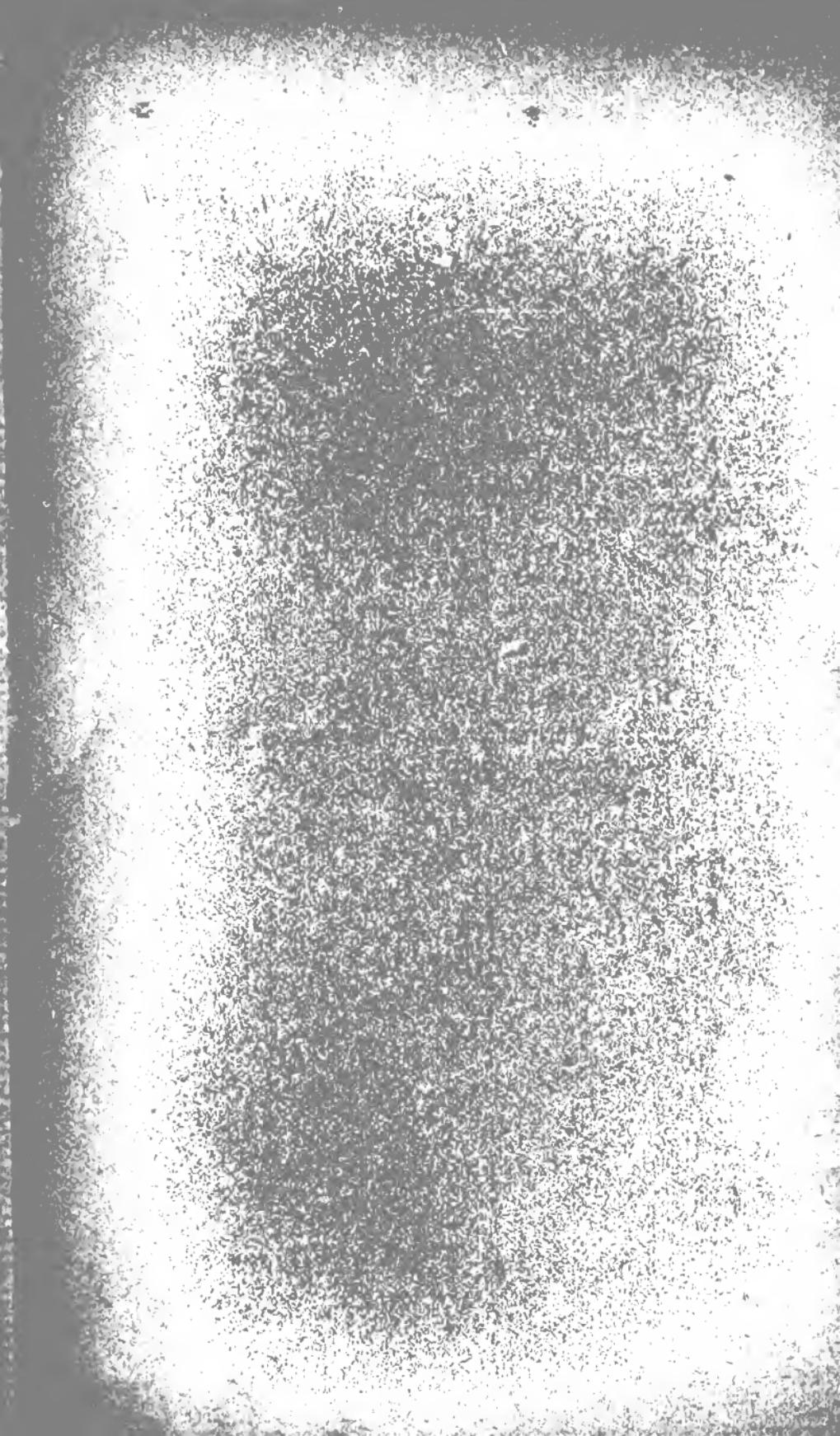
With a perfect knowledge of his many shortcomings, regrets for his numerous faults, increasing corpulence, whitening locks, deepening wrinkles, fading eyesight, inordinate pride, and dislike of pickled radishes, by

THE AUTHOR

as the only means of securing for

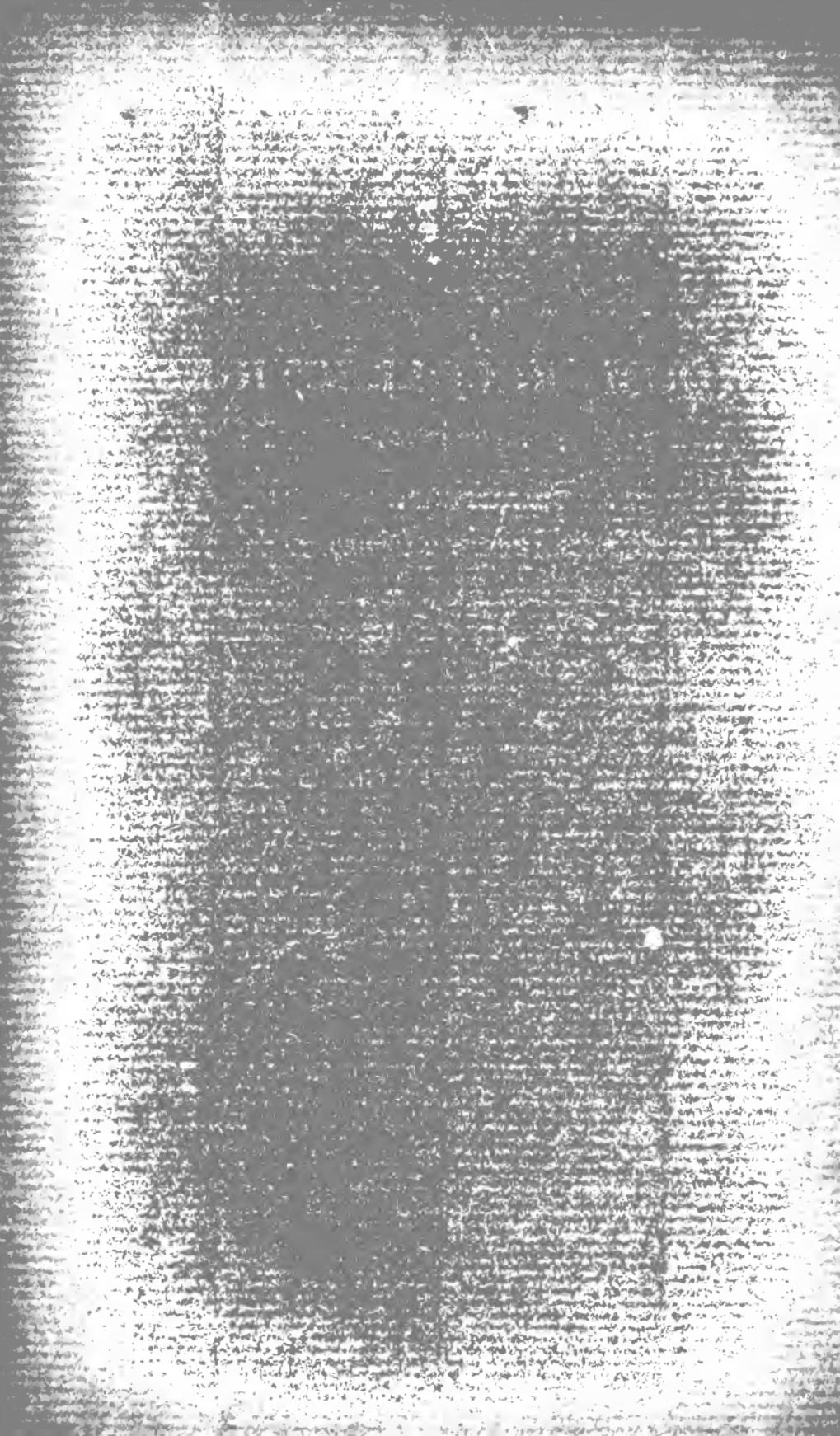
ROBERT GANTHONY

such a compliment.



CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Introduction	7
The Author's Author	8
Early Days	9
From Liverpool to Richmond, Surrey	25
Choosing a Profession	26
In a City	29
In the Law	30
Off to America	31
The Chicken Farm	42
Back in England	55
Mrs German Reed	58
Samuel Phelps	60
Charles Calvert	61
Seeking a London Engagement	79
Evenings from Home	93
French Experiences	99
The History of "Pick Me Up"	131
Fashions in Entertainments	143
How I became a Book Writer	145
How I became a Song Writer	147
How I became a Ventriloquist	149
How I became a Conjuror	154
How I became a Lightning Cartoonist	156
How I became a Nellie Ganthony in Bifurcated Garments	157
The Egyptian Hall	158
Moore and Burgess	161
Reminiscences of a Pleasure Trip	163
Music Halls	195
A. B. C.	204
Cycling in the Past	206
The Land of the Ostrich	211
"A Brace of Partridges"	236



RANDOM RECOLLECTIONS.

Introduction

(*Which the Reader will kindly skip*).

WHEN a well-known publisher offers to pay for and publish your autobiography it is difficult for a man—even for a man of my money-despising and retiring disposition—to refuse such an offer. The following pages are an evidence that I have not done so, and that my universally-admitted modesty has not overcome my love of gain nor my belief in “the sweet uses of advertisement.” My varied experiences having been considered funny by friends, to whom I made no charge for the amusement they afforded in relation, I trust, as people always enjoy and appreciate more that for which they pay than that which they get for nothing, the price, if not the contents, of this book will flavour its reception by the public with a fair measure of popularity, and repay you, dear reader—you do not mind my calling you “dear?”—for the time you may give to what I have to submit. If it does not, you will kindly blame my publisher for his belief in the good judgment of the public, and his faith in my desire, even at the expense of a too strict adherence to truth, to submit and properly focus the experiences which it is my pleasure now to chronicle.

The Author's Author.

BEFORE beginning to use that awful ninth letter of the alphabet, let me say a few words about my father, who is just eighty, and can do his years any day on a bicycle, or scull a party of ladies up the river and think nothing of it, which is not so bad, seeing that he spent a great part of his life as a professional man in India. It was to him that India owed the introduction of artificial teeth. Prior to his arrival, the toothless people of that empire had to masticate their food with teeth taken from dead bodies—snatched from the jaws of death, so to speak. The natives brought them to his predecessor in glass bottles, and also to him, till he effected a change, and gave his patrons manufactured teeth instead of the natural, but second-hand, or second-jaw, article.

I have heard my father tell a good story of an Indian prince, who, having lost his teeth, came to him and had a new set, selecting the "second-hand" teeth as being the most natural. He had just begun to renew the almost forgotten delights of mastication when his smiles so brought the new grinders into notice that the Hindoo clergy heard of it. There was a great scandal, and the poor prince had no peace till a religious ceremony was inaugurated, in which he had to pray forgiveness of his Creator and deliver up the teeth which, having been taken from a dead body, were "unclean." The teeth were publicly burnt, when the toothless sovereign was allowed to go home to the banquet awaiting him at his palace—a banquet which awaited him in vain, as all the dusky gentleman could do was to mumble out an order for a basin of well-boiled rice and munch that. A set of "artificial" teeth, having no religious disqualification, were ordered,

and in a few days caused the prince to smile again. The scandal and the sequel had a good effect on business, and did much to assist my father to make his fortune. There were difficulties still to be overcome with the ivory or bone teeth in their then state of excellence, especially when contrasted with a dark skin.

One prince had a set of artificial teeth, which, when fitted, he looked at in the glass. "They are too white for a man of my age," he said. "We can soon cure that," replied my father, bringing him a bottle of port. "Sip that slowly through them." Being busy, he left the prince to carry out his instructions and colour his teeth. When at last he returned to his patient he found the bottle empty, and His Royal Highness hopelessly drunk on the floor.



Early Days.

THOUGH the papers generally state that I am an American, I was born within a stone's-throw of Marble Arch, Lord Justice Crowder being one of my godfathers, and William Raper, the distinguished writer on navigation, being the other. My mother—*sit tibi terra levis*—spoke better French than English when I was born, having been educated in a French convent abroad, and it is to her my sisters and I owe what taste for music we possess. I can remember as a child the enthusiasm her little chansonettes provoked.

Sir Henry Irving always thought the name "Ganthonny" was an assumed one, but I never considered that it was necessary to assume an *alias* because I adopted an artistic career. I always felt it better to keep my own name, and if I could not

advance it publicly, I could at least keep it respected in my private life. The name was of Welsh origin, "Llanthony," and though my predecessors did not come over with the Conqueror, they were here when he arrived, which is quite as much to their credit. A piece of music was played at the Crystal Palace recently by "Ganthony," my great-grandfather, which is historically interesting, but not so profitable to me as when, at a more recent date, I sang my own songs there myself. My grandfather, when a boy, cut his arm, and with the blood wrote an oath that he would get into the Bank of England, which he did. While there he invented a ship's chronometer, which led to his starting a business in Lombard Street, and I am pleased to say that even now, with all the watches and clocks we import from Germany and America, there are none that keep better time than his do, though the hours they have recorded have nearly effaced our name from the dial plates. I am not proud of his being a watchmaker, but I am proud to know that he made good watches. He left the Bank, married twice, had about fifteen children, among whom was my father, left them all independent, became an alderman of the city, and but for his death at sixty would have become, like Dick Whittington, Lord Mayor of London, and been surrounded at Mansion House banquets with that gorgeously-attired retinue, the vulgar splendour of whose liveries is enough to deprive us in the eyes of foreigners of any claim to artistic taste. My mother's brother was a naval officer, and bled for his country, or, what is better, *made our enemies bleed for theirs*; the cutlass with which he did so hangs on the wall of my study, together with the flute, banjo, and violin I formerly used in the service of my country in "Evenings from

Home," but which are now, like the sword, put away for ever.

When my father returned from India he married and settled in Liverpool, where he bought a practice which he followed at the Town House. We lived there in the winter, and spent our summers at Little Brighton, a hamlet on the opposite side of the Mersey to New Brighton.

The duties of life, as they appeared to me at Little Brighton, were to cure a pair of knock knees (my own) by incessant riding, and a pair of weak eyes by never using them. Every morning after breakfast I had to put my heels together, when the doctor, or, in his absence, my father, would pass his open hand between my knees to see, as my father said, "if they were growing more distant to each other," at which the doctor always laughed as people will do at the utterances of those who are not professional humorists, and whom for business purposes they desire to propitiate. My eyes were then smothered in ointment and I was lifted on to "Tom's" back and sent off to spend the morning on the pad saddle of a white pony. In those days the train from Tithebarn Street Station—so called from the clergy's portion of the harvest being stored there, as the name Tithe Barn suggests—Liverpool, to Crosby, dumped its passengers out on a sand-hill, as they do nowadays in some parts of America and South Africa, and left them to scramble over the sinking sand to Little Brighton; a difficult matter after dark, as there were no lights nor path, which the drifting sands would have soon obliterated had one been made.

Not many months ago I was engaged with my sister, Nellie Ganthony—usually called my daughter—to give my entertainment at the subscription

concerts at Blundell Sands, and was told to book to Crosby. What a transformation forty years had made! The station was a large one, with waiting rooms, bookstall, etc., and the change outside brought me to a standstill in astonishment. The sand-hills had vanished, and instead I saw broad asphalted roads, substantial, well-built, electric-lighted residences, an hotel, a cab rank ; trees, well-laid-out gardens, with costly shrubs on ground that was formerly thought only fit for rabbits. From a boy I have heard nothing but a cry of bad times and the decadence of our country, and yet, what has happened in those years of lamentation? Only what has happened all over our country, and yet, with signs everywhere of the nation's wealth and growth, we still have the wail about England's decadence. We so accept this growth of towns as a matter of course that, until we visit a country which stands still, we do not realise its significance. I asked of a youthful porter where Little Brighton was, and he only grinned and said he'd never heard of it, and there wasn't not no such place. This is a fine thing for a man who wants to write his autobiography, I thought—no childhood's home ! the very one thing upon which I had yearned to display my literary ability. In a burst of retrospective eloquence I intended to draw a picture of my days of innocence that would have made the army of novelists tremble in their chairs, and here the whole of my ambitions are crushed by a porter who tells me "there ain't not no such place." If I can't begin my book, like my friends Corney Grain and George Grossmith, by proving to the public that I was a child once, I won't write the book at all. I next inquired of an old man—also a porter—and he looked at me curiously, wiped with his sleeve the exudence from his brow, by which he earned his daily bread, and

told me that I would find what was left of it at the end of the town.

Feeling like Rip Van Winkle when he awoke from his long sleep, I left the station and wandered off in search of the hallowed spot where my days of juvenance were spent. I walked past fine churches, shops (we had in my time to go to Waterloo for prayers and haberdashery), public buildings, etc., and it was only when there was a break in the continuity of the houses that the sand-fiend resumed its old pranks, covered the asphalted road knee deep, and brought back many a recollection of how the sand storms smothered us when there were but a few isolated houses.

As the town became shabbier and dingier I began to recognise among the buildings landmarks which I had often looked for when crossing the hills from the station to my "childhood's home," with which I seemed now to be in measurable distance of renewing my acquaintance. "Here," I soliloquised, as I stood opposite to it, "is the garden wall I used to climb to steal green gooseberries," and my teeth shivered as I remembered how I recklessly scrunched the unripe fruit. It was not because I disliked them ripe that I ate them green, but because immaturity was a condition of procuring them at all, as when they were ripe the owner gathered, or intended to gather, them for his own use. The wall, mark you, was not a wall upon which, in the glory of manhood, I could rest my arms, but a wall I feel it no disgrace to my athleticism to say that I would not try and climb now for all the green gooseberries in Covent Garden. What bothered me was that I remembered a stream which ran alongside the wall where I fished for minnows and caught colds.

"Looking for anything, sir?" inquired a butcher,

standing outside a shop where I remembered a large apple tree.

"Yes," I replied ; "I am looking for a river."

"A river! Oh, you're standing on it. They've bricked it over—it's a drain now."

"Poor little minnows and sticklebacks!" I muttered, as I walked on. "How do you enjoy the improvement?"

I felt sorry for them. What an end of the world it must have seemed to them when their stream, with its waving reeds and wild flowers, was bricked over and turned into a drain!

Having discovered the locality of the stream, I soon found our once isolated cottage, built in by a number of workman's stone dwellings. There were the stables all fallen to decay, where I had often seen our "Becca," who was my mother's maid before my mother was married, take out the mare at daybreak and go for a bareback scamper across the sand-hills and along the Formby shore. The dear old thing, the friend of all us children, is now comfortably settled in a Richmond Almshouse. No woman ever deserved better to end her days in peace, and remain the friend of those she has known and tended from the day of their birth. It is not the fashion for our modern transitory domestic to only have one situation, or devote her life to one family, but our "Becca" does not regret it. How she used to handle a saw and chisel and make my rabbit hutches ; what a shot she was at marbles ; and how she could spin a top—she had no rheumatism in those days, poor old dear.

When I repaired to the Assembly Rooms, where I had that night to sing, I had still more cause for astonishment. The whole building was beautifully arranged for entertainments of various kinds, with every convenience which experience could suggest.

At night the room was crowded with an audience entirely in full dress, which is very complimentary to the entertainer, and gives him or her a very favourable opinion of the residents. Liverpool audiences, I consider, are among the best in England.

Full of the change I had seen, I told the audience of the place as I knew it, how the ground below and around us was a warren, which I thought was historical and amusing. They seemed to accept my facts with a good deal of caution. In the interval some ladies came to be introduced, when one of them said, "I suppose, Mr Ganthony, you tell that story of your childhood's home everywhere you go?" It is a bit hard when you do happen to speak the truth that you are not believed! But I always find that when I romance a bit people say, "I know *that* happened," and when I speak the truth they say, "Where *do* you expect to go to?"

The reception rooms off from the hall are elegantly furnished and admirably suited to receive people, so we had quite a little conversazione after the entertainment. The audience then drove away, expressing themselves delighted with their evening, and so finished up the week in what seemed to me a very sensible fashion. The hon. secretary, a prominent Liverpool lawyer—I am on my oath now—went off with my sister's bag containing, I believe, curling irons, powder puff, hairpins, and a bottle of the most nauseous cough mixture ever concocted; I know this because that evening she had tried to poison me with it. His bag contained the pair of trousers, dirty collar, muddy boots, and coloured necktie he wore down, and a pair of pyjamas—an indifferent substitute to a young lady for an embroidered and befrilled night-dress. The oldest, ramshackle cab I ever saw in my life drew up after everybody had departed and my

sister's "carriage" was at the door. The door could give it points in regard to paint and stability. Into this vehicle she got with her Alonzo, the gentleman who has given her her last engagement (a marital one), and was driven to Liverpool.

I returned with one of the directors, Mr Isherwood, to the "Willows," Blundell Sands, where as his guest I remained till Monday, on which evening we played at Southport. It is owing to this gentleman's hospitality, which kept me in Crosby, that this book contains a few more references to my "childhood's home."

On Sunday morning we went for a twelve-mile walk along the shore, and it was curious what a crowd of things different scenes brought to my mind, of which otherwise I should never have thought again.

That awful day on which the *Royal Charter* was wrecked my father and a brother dentist went duck-shooting. On the previous day I thought my dad should look as smart as his friend, and, turning my attention to his fowling-pieces, I, with the aid of a piece of sandpaper, removed the bronze from the barrels, and, after a hard day's work, made them as bright as a military rifle, of course spoiling them. It is to my parent's credit that he didn't thrash me; he didn't, or I should have remembered it. He saw that I had meant well, and merely explained to me that my energies had been misdirected. Next morning we started in a basket gig in which, when we reached the Alt river, I was to return alone, leaving my elders to go after the ducks. Driving back I saw a lot of snipe, so, having a gun, I thought that I would have some sport too. I stopped the pony, and, full of excitement, blazed away right into the birds, the kick of the gun throwing me flat on my back. I rose to find the birds also on their backs. These I bagged,

and picking up the gun, I returned to the spot where I had left the gig, to discover that the pony had bolted at the report of the fowling-piece, and, with the gig, now formed an almost indistinct object on the horizon. When I came home I informed my mother what had happened, whereupon she told Jim (I think that was his name) to get on the mare and ride to Waterloo and see if he could hear anything of "Tom" and the basket trap. The man stared at her and said, "Go and find the pony, marm? Why, he's been home these two hours." He had found the pony and gig outside the stable, and, supposing we had left them there, put both away.

The river Alt, which empties itself into the sea near Formby Lighthouse, is a tidal river which, with the great rise and fall of the sea on this coast, some 15 or 20 feet, leaves its sloping banks deep in slimy mud, at the bottom of which the river runs at ebb tide. Here we used to play at being "crocodiles," which was not enough; we ought to have *been* crocodiles to run the risks we did in the pursuit of enjoyment. To play at "crocodiles" we would first undress, then crawl upon our stomachs to the river from the sand-hills across the hot sand, glide down the muddy, slimy bank into the water, our pace increasing as we did so. On reaching the river we had to turn sharply in the water to avoid going head first into the opposite bank, when suffocation would have been an immediate consequence, as no swimming and no exertion will free you from a dive into mud. To get out, we had a rope from the top of the bank to the river, by which we pulled ourselves out with our hands, coming out of the mud like Basuto piccaninnies. To dry ourselves, we rolled in the hot sand, and when dry, removed the mud, which came off in cakes, after which we resumed our clothes. Fashionable folk

take mud baths now, or I should have felt constrained to omit this recollection from my repertory.

When I took leave of my kind host on the Monday morning, I went for another stroll to the scenes of my early days. They looked dismal and deserted, for the fashion and glory of the place had gone to the once lonely railway station, though nothing seemed more unlikely in my time, but this is always what does happen ; so, speculative land purchasers, buy with this fact in memory.

I was taking a last look at " Beach Cottage"—the name has just come back to me—when an old man passed and wished me good-day. I asked him if he knew if Thomas Holden, our former landlord, was alive, and he replied, " I be alive, or I couldn't get about as I do." All his children, their children, his wife, and all his kith and kin had died and left him. Having answered my questions he asked who I was, and I told him.

" Lor', you have growed ! " he exclaimed.

" One does in forty years," I replied.

" I remember you ; you was a sturdy little chap in them days, and my! what fat legs you had ! and you have got 'em still, and them plaid trousers sets 'em off too ! What a pretty woman your mother was ; my! she were a pretty woman, and so pleasant, and a foreigner, too ! Dear, dear ! Come in and see the old place." I assented and followed him. " I live here myself now ; it's a bit lonely at times. It's your furniture, same tables and chairs, same wall-paper—no, I ain't sure about the wall-paper. If my land had been them sand-hills near railway I should have been a rich man now. There's a lot of luck in life. We call the place after Mr Blundell. Ah! he knew how to buy land, he did. Glad to have seen you growed up as you have done. Good-day," and we shook hands and parted.

Returning by the green which ran down to the sea, and which was then the fashionable quarter, I came to a side lane which brought to my mind the recollection of a piratical band, of which I grieve to have to acknowledge that I was a member. In this lane there was an old green door which formerly admitted us through a kitchen garden to the pirates' cave—a disused greenhouse. The gardener permitted us to occupy it on being allowed to charge the members a penny a week each for rent, which brought him in elevenpence every Saturday. This he accepted, knowing that we had "power to add to our numbers," and the advent of new members would probably increase his rent roll to a shilling, which sum, he thought, ought to be the minimum—"the least" was the expression he used, as he had not the command of language which I have since that time acquired. I found the bolts and hinges rusted away, so I entered without difficulty, and the remnants of frame and glass showed me where the pirates' cave had once offered a retreat to as fierce a body of desperadoes as ever sucked lollipops.

While contemplating the cave I stepped back a little out of the draught, and this action drew my attention to my altered age. What member of the piratical band troubled about draughts?—pshaw! they didn't know that there were such things. I laughed as I lighted a cigar and looked with different eyes at the same piece of God's earth. Among the dank weeds growing inside the greenhouse I found a rusty table knife, which I wiped on the grass, and have now among the treasures in my study. We were all armed with a weapon of similar pattern, which were more easily procured than regulation daggers. These we stuck in our belts, upon these we swore our oaths, and with these we ate our food in the days of the once powerful but now widely dispersed piratical band.

My recollections of being a pirate are not those of unalloyed enjoyment. I was appointed "guard," as my eyes prevented me from attending school and thus gave me the necessary leisure, and as I was the only one who had a pony I was also the "cavalry." The combined duties of "guard" and "cavalry" were varied and onerous. I had to collect wood from the shore for our camp fires and cooking, catch fish, and pick up cockles or other edible molluscs for the sustenance of my comrades, and surreptitiously convey from home any table delicacy which occasion offered me an opportunity of appropriating. I was the youngest member of the band, which appeared to me a very exacting body, who drew their table knives and indulged in threats so unceasingly that I remember I got very weary and not a little apprehensive of their society. I not only caught minnows for their sustenance, but had to dress and prepare them —no easy task with poor eyesight and a blunt table knife. The captain had a flintlock pistol, which rather alarmed me, as he hinted several times that if there was any insubordination in the ranks (which meant me), and the funds permitted him, he would buy some powder and load it. The funds never did admit of his carrying his threat into execution, so the beastly weapon remained comparatively harmless. To obtain vegetables the captain organised raids on the various gardens whose owners cultivated kitchen stuff with sufficient success to make it worthy of our cupidity. These raids were more successful than one by a medical hero in South Africa just after I left, until one night when we made a terrible onslaught on an old chap's radishes. The old chap—whose analysis of our footprints on his carefully raked beds had led him to anticipate our visit—suddenly rose from behind a gooseberry bush and fired upon

us two barrels from the noisiest gun I ever heard, when the whole band fell to the earth like winged partridges. Astonished to find myself still alive, I got back to the greenhouse—the pirates' cave, I mean—and found them all there in solemn conclave. That night we swore with uplifted table knives that after the old chap's most ungentlemanly behaviour we would never patronise his garden again, and that oath the piratical band religiously kept.

Where are the members of the piratical band now? Do any of them cultivate suburban gardens and peevishly complain of the wanton behaviour of their youthful neighbours, and mourn the loss of their gooseberries that "pass in the night," and the apples that are, as far as the owner is concerned, "born to blush unseen?"

This recent visit to the North reminds me of many things that happened between the time that I was three and thirteen, to a few of which I will allude.

Liverpool was noted for its baths when public baths were not so common as now. We had the Cornwallis Street and the St George's, the latter being of filtered salt water. As soon as I could walk, my father took me to the St George's and taught me to swim, which I learnt before he had learnt to undress me—a difficult operation, as I wore petticoats, stays, and other apparel of feminine intricacy. I remember to this day his showing me in that crystal-clear water how to float, when I thought what a wonderful man my father must be—an opinion his increasing years only serves to confirm. There was so little of me that I always swam like a dog at first in order to keep up.

My mother gave me a bow and a quiver of arrows, and, as these were only to be used when I recited "My name is Norval," I took them with me to the

baths, leaving them in the dressing-box when I entered the water. Some bathers, I presume with an idea of gaining a practical experience of savage warfare, began shooting at each other with them. They tossed up who should have the first three shots, and then those who became the targets got out of range as expeditiously as possible, diving and dodging to escape the not unerring, but sufficiently accurate to be uncomfortable, aims of the archer in momentary possession of the bow and its quiver of three arrows. As they warmed to the excitement of the chase, the bath became absolutely dangerous, for an arrow from a toy bow does not strike you pleasantly when you are *in puris naturalibus*—which is Latin for having left your clothes in a bathing machine. I rather enjoyed seeing them hit each other, till I perceived the beautiful green velvet band come off my bow and float in the water, and the feathers of the arrows follow their example, while the quiver, which was of brown paper, became an unpleasant mass of mere pulp. The ruin of my bow and arrow brought tears to my eyes, though I am inclined to think that the men whose bodies were punctured with arrow marks had more cause to cry than I had.

It was at the Cornwallis Street Baths that I made my first public appearance, at the annual swimming match in the race for boys under fourteen, and it all came about through a chum named M'Kenzie. "You should go in for it," said he. "You won't win, because I am going to win, but it will give you confidence for another time."

The entrance money seemed to me a small fortune; but my father advanced that cheerfully, and always gave me a sixpence to go and practise, and also taught me how to swim on my side, and turn and kick off when I got to the end of the bath.

When the night came I was artful enough to discard my swimming drawers, knowing how they impede one's progress through the water. This occurred to some of the boys as we all stood in a row on the spring-board, and they expostulated ; but the umpire said, "What did it matter with a child like that?"

One—two—three—off! shouted the starter, and we dived then.

I remember struggling among a lot of boys' legs in the water, getting kicked on the head, in the back, and scratched all over with their toe nails, until I found an opening and came to the surface. After two lengths there were only five of us—my friend M'Kenzie, the canny Scot, a bad fifth. He told me that he was going to win, so I expected to see him come surging forward, but he didn't. In the last length we were only three. The one who was third made a dash forward, to which I responded, and we left the other boy behind. The auditors on the sides of the bath began to get wonderfully excited, and took up the cry, "The Sprat will win!" The "Sprat" knew what it was about, kept cool, and swam without splashing. In the home length I had my opponent on my left, and could see him without turning, whereas he had to turn to see where I was, which of course impeded his progress. When I had but half a length to win I swam my fastest, and drew away from him, and touched the wall amid a roar of laughter and applause, which was further increased when I walked on the spring-board and made them all a polite bow to cries of "Bravo, Sprat!"

The Mayor of Liverpool gave me a silver pencil case and a lot of good advice, which I forgot before I reached home, where I discovered that I had lost the pencil case; so I had nothing left to mark the event

but the eulogium of the press, which, as I was not an actor then, I read with interest and pleasure.

Almost the first winter that I can remember I was taught to skate, and, while still in petticoats, could cut a three and do the outside edge backwards.

Each year we went to Sefton meadows, which were annually flooded to the depth of about three feet. This gave acres of skating without any danger except to myself, as I was credited with being the only skater who was small enough to drown. I had, of course, this comforting reflection—that I was also the least likely to break the ice by my weight. I believe the rustics in short smocks, who tied wooden skates on to their hobnail boots and spent the whole day going round the meadows, like a flock of ducks, one after the other are still, year after year, doing the same thing. Sometimes we drove to Sefton and sometimes we went by train. It was cold driving, and so it was at the little station, the small waiting room of which was, of course, crowded, only the lucky few getting near the fire. The less fortunate would get up a cry that the train was coming, but that trick was old and no one would move. I told my father and uncle that I would get them out, which I did by ringing the station bell violently; then they left the room hurriedly to secure good places in the train, while our party got round the fire and spent the next half-hour in comfort.

"What did you mean by ringing that bell?" asked the stationmaster.

"I meant to get a seat by the fire," replied a little voice, and no more was said.

From Liverpool to Richmond, Surrey.

DENTISTRY in England is not what it was in India, and my father got sick of it and retired when I was thirteen to live at Richmond, where we have remained ever since.

What a lovely rural place Richmond was in those days, and here change has been as great as in the North! The District Line had only just then been completed, and people not having become accustomed to it, clung to the old route *via* Waterloo. The crowds that fill the station on Sundays and holidays now were not known. There were no cripples with sores and wounds, who make holiday resorts so cheerful, to delight you as you came out of the station; no men drawing on the pavement. The Richmond Cricket Club was content to play on our village green; yes, and we played the "All England" eleven there, and the town turned out to see it. At the old Richmond theatre, of which I have Charles Kean's knocker on my MS. cupboard, we played burlesques and plays, and it was at these performances that I made my *début* and my first successes as an actor. How this theatre went down and got out of favour! At the last performance I saw there was a man lying down on the seats in the pit, and holding up an umbrella to keep off the rain which came through the roof. As he was the only occupant in that portion of the house, no one behind him complained, as people do, with reason, of the all-obscuring matinee hat.

My father bought a number of houses which, by pulling down and building up, he made into a good residence with a large garden. From this house, which was in the town, right away to St Mathias Church, all was fields. Mount Ararat, now a closely-packed

row of villas, was then a country lane with a stream running down one side, overhung with blackberry and hawthorn. The only building, with the exception of Admiral Stopford's, half-way up the hill, was a cottage at which lived a gipsy who let out donkeys and sold milk from the cows which grazed in the fields next our garden, where we often shot starlings. The gipsy didn't mind, provided we did not pepper his cows.

Choosing a Profession.

WHEN my father asked me what I would like to be, I answered with perfect frankness that I should prefer to do nothing, and was accounted a fool, yet there are plenty of men I know, who, if they had their choice to-morrow, would give the same answer as I did, provided they were not restricted as to the amount of whisky they were to consume while following their new existence.

"Have you no ambition, no desire to gain distinction and fame?" asked my father, a little out of temper. I replied that I was animated by none of the feeling to which he had made reference.

"You will have to do something."

"Why?" I answered. "Uncle Charles didn't do anything, why should I?"

"Your uncle had a private income, which makes all the difference."

"Where did he get it?" I asked.

"What are you going to do for a living?" retorted my father, in a voice that put an end to further inquiry.

"Well, if I can't do nothing, I will be a king."

I had an idea that kinging was an indolent life spent principally on a throne with hanging curtains.

Had I known the hard work to be gone through to be the Prince of Wales I would not have chosen a regal life. Did you, dear reader, ever cut up the beef for a school treat, or mow a lawn with a pair of shears? Did you ever give away two or three chests of medals to colonial troops? Spend an hour receiving purses one by one? Did you ever hold your arm out for five minutes? If not, try it, and you will find there is work in playing at royalty. Had I met as many kings and queens, and been at as many functions as I have since, I should never have considered that being a king meant a life of indolence and ease. The profession of king I gave up at that time with reluctance, and decided that, if I could not lead a monarchical life, I would be an architect. Having decided to become an architect, the next question was how to do it. The solution came in the shape of an advertisement in the *Daily Telegraph* from a Quaker architect who wanted an articled pupil. Upon this gentleman we called.

When a father asks a boy what he would like to be, he asks the boy's opinion of the mental picture he has formed of the business he is about to adopt, which is very often a different thing altogether to reality.

I expected to find at an architect's office a spacious studio, large drawing boards, with plans in progress of stately cathedrals, with ladies in bright coloured frocks crossing to prayers under the heads of prancing horses pulling gorgeous carriages, and emerald green foliage growing out of burnt sienna branches, as one does in a completed form in the office windows of an estate agent; but how different was the realisation of my dreams!

We climbed up a rickety stair of an office off Oxford Street into a dingy room, where the Quaker

architect and what was, presumably, an articled pupil, were with difficulty discovered in dense clouds of tobacco smoke. The pupil, as I had anticipated, was designing a church, and this, together with the fact of his master being a Quaker, gave us assurance of their respectability, and a renewal of that confidence we felt was leaving us.

"You—I mean *thee*—must get thy son a box of compasses," remarked the architect, offering us a chair, which necessitated his standing. To which my father remarked that of course such things were essential and that he would get them.

"Nay," replied the Quaker, "I will get thy son these things."

"Very well," said my father.

"I can get thy son these things much cheaper than he could; men in this world take advantage of youth and inexperience."

My father offered to pay for the articles, and the Quaker readily accepted his proposition—and the money.

On the next day at nine o'clock I went to the architect to enter upon my duties, and found the place deserted. I waited some time and then inquired at a public-house about him, and as the Quaker owed the landlord for sundry doses of liquid refreshment, he was sufficiently interested in the information I brought to go with me to his office. The publican did not accept the Quaker's sudden disappearance in the philosophic spirit that I did, but gave indulgence to a series of invective unfit for publication, at least in these pages. I went home not quite comprehending the whole transaction, and this experience concluded my first attempt at getting my own living.

In the City.

HAVING had enough of architecture, I went in for commerce. Mr Edward Higgin (a relative of "Bellew" the reciter, and like him originally named O'Higgins), who was a great friend of my father out in India, where for years they used to take their before sunrise rides together, happening to dine at our house and hearing of the "Quaker" incident, offered me a place in his office. Before doing so he gave me some dictation and arithmetic. I did so badly that he told me he offered me the situation not for what I had done, but out of friendship for my father, which struck me at the time as a very uncomplimentary method of engaging me. He further said that I should begin at fifty pounds a year, which, to a certain extent, assuaged my wounded feelings. I did not enjoy this salary long, as it was decreased each year with a regularity that showed how little my services were appreciated. Just as I thought of expostulating, the firm failed and I retired from commerce.

I remember the first day I went to the office I sat down at a desk and no one took any notice of me ; it was not their duty to give me anything to do, and Mr Higgin was away. It seemed better than school, because there were no masters and no one played tricks on you as they do on a new boy. At two, some one said, "Why don't you go out to dinner ?" which I did, and when they all left I went home, where I found all my aunts and relatives eager to hear how I liked the city and my new duties. Then I was told what an important step it was in life, and how by honesty, perseverance, and a lot of other things, I should become an alderman like my grandfather, to

which position I never had any ambition, and while my success in life was being discussed and my health drunk, I went for a long walk. I thought that I would try to please everybody, and I went to the Birkbeck Institute after office hours, and slaved at arithmetic and book-keeping ; but if I understood it one night, it all left me the next day, and I seemed so foolish that I gave up the classes, and spent my time at the night art schools instead, which I never regretted. How different a feeling have I had when I have since been to the Birkbeck Institute to entertain the students, and heard the cheers and laughter with which my visits were greeted, sending them away ready for any amount of work, for which an evening's relaxation with me had fitted them ! Such is the difference of employing the talents you have, and trying to do that for which you are by Nature unfitted. "Never do nothing what isn't yer forte, for, if you do, you'll find yerself a splashing around the canal, figuratively speaking," says Artemus Ward—poor E. C. Browne, who made the world laugh, and was buried by the Savage Club in 1867.

In the Law.

NEXT to commerce, I suppose the profession for which I was most unsuited would be the law, so I thought I would try that, and I found myself in the Temple. The result of this was that my employer's nephew fired me with the idea of going abroad, and, as his experiences went to prove the folly of genteel emigration, I determined to emigrate.

My father took a broad view of the matter, and generalised on the subject of our nation as colonists,

and how desires like mine had led to the foundation of empires, whereas friends of narrower views asked me what the devil I was going to do when I got there?

"If Englishmen had always talked like that we should have no colonies at the present moment," remarked my father.

I agreed with him, and suggested that I had better go out first class, as there was quite enough discomfort on board ship under the best of circumstances. Any possible discomfort that I might suffer he seemed to be perfectly resigned to, and advised me either to work my passage, and have some occupation, or go out steerage. As I had, for pecuniary reasons, to follow his advice, I purchased a cheap ticket for San Francisco, *via* Panama, and gave up the Temple and all chance of legal distinction, and sailed, or rather steamed, for New York.



Off to America.

WHEN I arrived at Lime Street Station, Liverpool, which is on the way to the United States, I was met by a number of kind friends whom I had never seen before. One old man suggested that I should go to bed, but, as the clock in the station was ten minutes past six, I scorned the idea, and determined to go and see the house at which we formerly lived. After walking about for some time and finding no one up, and our house turned into a bakery which was not yet open, I began to think that something was wrong, especially as the clocks indicated that it was about four. On returning to the station, and looking at the clock to ascertain if I had seen it aright, I found it was still ten minutes past six, and also discovered

that the hands were merely painted, as a porter told me, to see what size clock was wanted. The man who had offered me the bed was not to be seen, so I wandered about till the advance of day made Liverpool a little more companionable. In the St George's market I bought an orange—the first thing I could get—and I never have tasted a better one. Waiting about I was persuaded to buy a number of tin pans and mugs, bedding, etc., which I was told all emigrants required, but which I never used, and with these not very ornamental additions to my luggage I found myself on the landing stage.

What troubles a lad of eighteen with a prospect of seeing the world before him? I had gone through worse troubles up the river camping out—a good training this for young fellows who may have to rough it! There was a man there who had with him a whip and saddle and other things that made him appear to me a regular colonist; but in that I was mistaken. A cheerful little sturdy man borrowed a light from me, and he told me that he had crossed several times, and had a ranch out West. He had nothing but a small handbag, and seemed to smile at the man with the saddle and whip. This little man was never ill, and devoted himself to making the women and children happier during the whole of the voyage out. We scrambled out of the tender up on to the *Servia*, and found huddled together on the forecastle, lads, men, women, babies, and children of all ages, some crying. The poor mothers, who should have had someone to look after them, were fully occupied attending to their children, who wanted all sorts of things it was impossible to procure for them. Suddenly the big steamer trembles, the land on each side appears to be slipping away, and

we know that we are leaving Old England and about to trust ourselves to the mercies of the ocean. The roughest time we had was crossing to Queenstown, when the steerage did not become attractive. I took my tin bowl and had a basin of soup, which I ate on deck, and that was the only time I tasted the steerage fare ; after that I made other arrangements with a steward, who, for a pound, agreed to supply me with the first cabin fare as he could get it. The meals were fairly regular, and the steward was a faithful steward and earned his pound. When he had rescued anything for me from the table of the maritime Dives, he would, either by a sudden touch on the arm or a wink or nod, indicate that I was to follow him to his cabin, where he would have a combination of good things, not selected according to gastronomic rule, but rather as chance permitted him to procure them. I might dine off a cherry pie or an entire duck, a good helping of salmon or what not. At all events I had as much, if not rather more, than I could eat, and as regards the variety of food that voyage strongly impressed me with the different things that the human digestion could master without caving in. On the "glorious fourth of July" I was asked to paint a design for the cabin—Britannia, and a figure representing America—which I did, and received a cabin to myself, and meals during the progress and completion of the picture, which gave the steward a rest. While waiting off Queenstown for the mails I made a water colour of the scene, when, to my surprise, the sailors cleared a gangway so that I might have an uninterrupted view. The officers watched the progress of my work through their glasses from the bridge. After that I was kept busy taking likenesses of passengers and sailors till I had filled two sketch books.

What curious ideas these steerage emigrants

had! One man's idea in going abroad was to try a coffee machine that he had with him. He said how convenient it was, as, should he find himself out on the plain, he could always have a cup of coffee in a few minutes. It had not occurred to him that the easiest way would be to make a fire with the materials at hand. We persuaded him to make us a cup of coffee, which he nearly did after a two hours' endeavour, and had not a wave dispersed him and the expectant coffee drinkers, and scattered his apparatus and contents all over the forecastle, he might have done so. The ambition of another was to have a gold watch. Another had a drunken wife, and he settled the whole business of divorce by a ticket to the New World. A steady little carpenter this man was, who was not happy till the sailors let him have some work to do. There is no need of anxiety for a man like that in a new country. I had a Mexican hammock with me which I slung up from one pillar to another of the dining saloon when the rest had retired, and found it very comfortable and select. Thus I neither dined nor slept in the steerage. One morning at dawn it grew so cold that I asked the sailor guarding the hold why it was so, and he said that we were passing an iceberg. I rushed upstairs and saw the most glorious sunrise I ever beheld. A few miles off a large iceberg glittered with all the prismatic hues of a cut diamond. I tried to sketch it, but the air was so cold that I could scarcely hold a pencil, and this in July. I did make a sketch, though, and the captain pasted it in the log-book. Do you remember it, captain, or have you gone where icebergs cease from troubling? We saw a shark one day, to which one of the steerage passengers threw a pie he had bought in Liverpool. The shark swallowed it with a

bit of a grimace, which was probably due to the fact of the pie being stale and the dish not having been removed. There was a little girl in the steerage who seemed very lonely and miserable. Her father was on board, and left his child to rough it in the steerage! but he had gone first class. So going first class is not always a guarantee that you meet first-class people, is it?

A day or so off the "Banks," with the steam-whistle boo-boooing through a thick fog: this clears away and we get a first view of America, a low-lying bank, in the dawn of early morn. How refreshing the green banks of Staten Island look after a week of horizon-reaching water. How the passengers on the beam-engine steamers on their summer excursions to Long Branch and other watering places wave us a greeting, and with what eager cheers the emigrants respond to this welcome to a new land. May fashion in America never dull this kindly greeting; no lady hesitates now to wave to the incoming stranger.

At Castle Gardens more friendly strangers of the "crimp" order awaited us, this time to change our sterling gold into smelling emblems of credit in the shape of greenbacks (gold was sold in those days at varying daily prices, for America had not then returned to specie payments). Castle Gardens struck me as a very pretty part of the city, with its shade, trees, and glimpses of shipping. The day or two before the steamer *via* Panama started I employed seeing what I could of the city. One letter of introduction from my father I felt I must use, and so, brushing myself up, I called at the office of Edward Hill, chemical importer. He was surprised and delighted to see me, invited me to spend a few weeks with him and see New York. He would accept no denial, so I let the steamer go without me to Panama, and on the evening

he had named I presented myself at his office. We crossed the ferry to Brooklyn—"the bridge was not then built, sir," as the song says—where a pair-horse carriage was waiting for us. The coachman told my host something that annoyed him, but we drove through Brooklyn Park and back to Washington Avenue, where he lived. He had informed me that his wife and children had gone to the hill country to escape the heat, and we should find the house empty; but he did not tell me that we should find the cook "full," the dinner spoilt, and the whole place in confusion. This is what we did find. We carried the cook into the stable, where she could sleep off the effect of the numerous bottles she had sampled. My friend was quite upset over this incident.

"I wouldn't let it worry you," I said.

"I shall not," he replied. "I shall go and put up at the Hoffman House, and I am sorry that I shall not be able to entertain you as I had looked forward to doing."

"Here's a nice affair," I thought to myself. "I have let the steamer go, and have now a fortnight to wait in an expensive city like New York!"

Having, with the coachman's assistance, got the drunken cook out of the way, we found she had prepared enough dinner to be eatable, so we sat down and made the best of it.

After dinner, as we sat smoking on the piazza, I said, "There is something the matter with me. I keep seeing flashes of light gliding about."

"Those are fire flies—lightning bugs they call them here," answered Mr Hill, and my alarm subsided.

I slept that night in Washington Avenue surrounded by mosquito nets, and went over next day to New York with my friend and then left him. I wandered down South Street, and crossed to New

Jersey for a blow on the Hudson, for it was very hot. While getting a meal in a small eating-house, I saw in a two-day old paper an advertisement for an artist to draw on wood for engraving. "That would suit me," I thought, so I returned by the next boat, and went up to the address in Broadway.

"I suppose you have filled this situation?" I asked, showing the paper.

"Not a darn soul been near the place," was the answer I got from a lady-like gentleman who came to greet me.

"Well, a 'darn soul' has come now," I said; "and can he have the place?"

"Have you drawn from the statuary and all that?"

"I have," I replied, thinking of the night schools at which I had worked.

"When can you show us what you can do?" he asked.

"Now, if you have a pencil and a piece of paper," was my answer.

A drawing desk was put before me, and I was handed a sheet or so of paper and some pencils. He rang a bell, and a lady came in, and, having fixed a paper dress on a bust, he said, "Now, go ahead, and let's see what you can do," whereupon they both left, and I settled down to sketch the pattern before me.

When I had nearly completed it he returned, and approvingly examined what I had done.

"Don't liquor, do you?—eyes look a bit red."

"Intemperance is not among my faults," I answered with conviction.

"What do you want, and when can you come?"

"I can come to-morrow, and I want as much as I can get."

"Twenty-five dollars a week to begin," he suggested, to which amount I agreed. The firm was Butterick

and Co., and the gentleman Mr Pollard, then starting, I believe, but now with branches in London (Regent Street), Paris, and elsewhere in Europe. There were several artists—Dutch, English, and one American. We all worked in a top room with a glass roof. It was a—to me—congenial occupation. Each man had his day for whistling, when the others were silent. I dislike whistling, and so on my day we drew without musical accompaniment. I had a very pleasant time with them for two years, and for their kindness to me I wish them all good luck, and here immortalise them.

When I got back to Mr Hill's office I told him that I had secured a situation at twenty-five dollars a week, and that I entered upon my duties on the morrow, to which he replied, "I never heard of such a thing! —an Englishman come out who doesn't want assistance!" and he stared at me.

They had kindly printed on my "'Frisco" ticket that in case the owner did not use any portion the money would be refunded, which it was, after my father threatened to go to law over it. I suspect that when that lot of tickets was exhausted, the new issue said nothing about returning the money.

Thus it was that a drunken cook changed the whole plan of my life, and caused me to settle in New York, where I spent the happiest seven years I have ever known.

Having decided to remain in New York, my friend told me that I must get away from Castle Gardens, so I took rooms in Fourteenth Street, then a residential, but now, I believe, a business street—for the tide of trade will creep on and swamp the residential portion of prosperous cities, and send it further away. I did not say what my business was—for English people carry with them a little

snobbery wherever they go—and as the winter came I found myself, through the introductions of my friend, invited out a great deal—often dancing with young ladies whose frocks I had had a hand in designing. I was fond of part singing then, and belonged to the "Brooklyn Heights Vocal Society" and the "Eight o'clock Club"—the first being for men's voices only, on the German plan in vogue in America of having first and second tenor and first and second bass, not an alto as is customary in England ; the second club was for mixed voices. Its members met at each others' houses for the "Eight o'clock Club," practised regularly, and really sang very well. Americans are naturally clever, and do well anything they give their minds to. The male voice club had its own rooms and gave concerts, whereas the others did not, but instead would go out on a yacht on the Sound and sing glees on fine moonlight nights, when the other boats would bring up in the wind behind us to listen, for really good part singing sounds very pleasantly across the water.

Even then I used to be writing plays. I read one to myself the other day, a colossal work, written on both sides of the paper, and which would take at least three nights to get through. I thought that play a very fine one when I wrote it, but could get no one to learn it. One member of our amateur dramatic club said to me, "You will be able to write a play some day, but you haven't the necessary experience yet." At the time I thought he was rather discouraging me; now I know that he was quite right. Amateurs think they can do anything.

My acting, singing, and flute playing soon made me popular, and the introductions of my friend gave me an acquaintance with good American society—a far more exclusive society, by the way, than English

people imagine. It shuts its doors to the mass of half-bred, pushing Americans we receive with open arms.

What lovely summer trips we had to the Catskills! A steam up the Hudson to the base of the mountains, then a drive in a spider-wheeled buggy. If, as we did, you headed the procession of vehicles, it was a strange sight to look back as you ascended the hills, and see nothing from the ferry whence you started but a dense cloud of dust, through which the sounds of laughter and the shouts of the drivers were the only things to indicate that crowds were following. As the road wended up the mountain we passed a pretty house, the residence of an artist; then we went through a tunnel which struck a chill through us, the ice in the rocks never melting. With the road on one side abruptly terminating in deep cliffs which meant destruction if the horses shied, we met a man driving alone in a single buggy at a great pace down the mountain road, and, though it was morning, quite drunk. The driver told us it was the doctor, and that he was always that way. A merciful Providence kept the horse sober! In the mountains you are reminded of Rip Van Winkle; the strange men are there gathering wood and playing ten pins, which is the favourite game. Nine pins being made illegal, another pin was added, the law evaded, and the game continued.

Adding a pin reminds me of a story of Wm. Rignold's. Out in Australia when he was playing his famous part in "The Two Orphans," he was informed at one town that there was a man in a portable theatre who would be certain to put up whatever play he did. To prevent this Mr Rignold sent him a lawyer's letter threatening him with proceedings if he did so, and returned to his friend at whose house he was staying

and said, "I have settled him, and made him take his bills down." "He will play it," said the friend, and next morning when Rignold looked out of his bedroom window, which commanded a view of the portable theatre, he saw put up in large type, "The *Three Orphans*," which secured the portable theatre the patronage of those who like to get as much as they can for their money. Another Australian story of Rignold's is of a man who toured for years with "East Lynne." Whatever play had recently been a success, whether "Charley's Aunt," "A Pair of Spectacles," "Sweet Lavender," he always advertised their names, but went through "East Lynne" with unblushing effrontery.

My social success began after a few years to pall upon me, and a recurrence of my eye trouble, through drawing lace and other close work, compelled me to give up doing what I liked for the more respectable, though wearisome, vocation of wholesale tea importing, the dull routine of which made my restless nature long for a change.

Unfortunately for me, about this time I saw in a shop window a book entitled "How the French Make Fowls Pay." I read the book, and the subject possessed me. If the French make fowls pay, why should not the English? Was it not a more natural life than this existence of private theatricals and party going? Did not all the papers advise the youth of the country to leave the cities and work on the land? I had not discovered then that journalists *know* more than they *do*, and wondered why they did not go and work on the land themselves. According to the book it was the easiest thing in the world to make a handsome income out of fowls, and, with an imagination that is useful for dramatic composition, but ruinous for practical enterprise, I saw myself the

centre figure of flocks of fowls, all bent on laying eggs to increase my revenues, I imagined ; cartloads of plump fowls going off to market, and an army of farm servants looking upon me with grateful fealty as their saviour and benefactor. With my imagination thus fired, my enthusiasm for the China trade began to pale. At this time the firm took in a sleeping partner, whose son entered the office as part of the contract, and as we then had more cats than mice, they viewed my departure with ill-concealed satisfaction. So good-bye to the tea trade and New York society, its glee clubs, its dance parties, its candy pulls, chowder picnics, surprise parties, Germans, private theatricals, etc. etc. Taking a farm at Bound Brook, New Jersey, I retired into pastoral life and devised plans for supplying America with eggs and poultry.



The Chicken Farm.

IT was winter when I went down to Bound Brook to see the farm. With the house agent and a friend I drove from the station in a sleigh to the home of my future labours. We had to stoop to pass under the overhanging blocks of ice left by the floods on the roadside, and we found the place buried in snow. The house was pleasantly situate on the rising ground and surrounded by pine trees, a paddock on the right of the private road up to the house, and a pleasure lawn on the left. At the back was a large orchard and open-air vineyard, which gave us more fruit than we could dispose of, as we found by experience that fruit and vegetables do not command fancy prices in a New Jersey village.

I had a brother—Richard the actor—"in the city,"

groaning under his unnatural existence. He worked at books underground nearly all day by gaslight. To him the poultry scheme seemed a happy issue out of all his troubles, and he quickly made up his mind to join me. Thus it was that two men without any practical experience, but with the contents of every book of poultry by heart, started a very difficult business with a training that rather unfitted them for it. In our case, it was intelligence wrongly employed; that is, our theories were correct and would have succeeded better had we employed cheaper and more suitable labour to carry them out.

In matters of poultry farming (or anything else) people always go to extremes—they are either going to make a fortune, or they say that poultry cannot possibly pay, the one view being as absurd as the other. Speaking without enthusiasm and with experience, I am sure the wholesale importation of eggs and poultry is a disgrace to our people and a slur upon their thrift and husbandry. Without starting large poultry farms, each cottager should contribute a certain number of eggs and birds to the city markets, instead of leaving it all for the French peasant to do.

The secret of the business is never to keep a fowl over two years. During that time it is profitable as an egg supplier, and at the end of that time it is still good for the table. Get good serviceable barn-door birds and select the best for stock, and, if you care for them, in a few years, if not before, you will have a serviceable collection. It is the old birds, which eat enormously, seldom lay, and are too tough to be eaten, which kill the profits of poultry-keeping. You will see plenty of these wherever poultry is kept in England. Nothing which can be grown should be purchased.

Among the books, "An Egg Farm" fascinated us the most—it was so delightfully theoretical. The fowl houses (according to the author of "An Egg Farm") should be underground—an excavation, in fact, with a wooden roof which could be raised to admit of entrance to clean them. This style of house we adopted, and a carpenter was engaged to make them. He was an honest man, and we had great difficulty in getting him to cut up the wood. He didn't believe in our theories, and would constantly stop when cutting a plank to see if we had not changed our minds. It evidently went against his feelings to cut up the wood, as he thought that we were only wasting our time and money.

When, to begin at the beginning, I had taken the house, I consulted Mrs Hill about furnishing it. Though she and most of the friends I had made in New York and Brooklyn were all against the scheme as being an act of folly, when she found that I had taken the farm she entered into the furnishing of it, and I drove round with her in her brougham and bought everything that we thought was necessary. I met my brother on the landing stage, and after a day in New York (he would not stay longer) we went down to "Brook Farm," as we named the place.

When you are accustomed to find meals all ready, your bed made when you return to it, the shirts, collars, etc., you throw off always back in your drawer clean, you accept all as a matter of course. When we got down to "Brook Farm" we had to tramp through melting ice and snow—those who have experienced spring in New Jersey will sympathise with us. On arrival we found that the man who had been there to

* This book, we discovered, was a work of pure imagination. The author, after divulging how a fortune could be made with an egg factory, became editor of a poultry paper.

receive the furniture had let them pile it where they pleased, had hung the key on the door, and left.

Everything got wet coming down—including the bedding—for they have a loose way of doing things in a new country. I don't think I ever saw such a muddle in my life. We would have lighted a fire, for we had some wonderful stoves, but the little matter of ordering coals had been entirely forgotten. The whole affair was so absurd that we both burst out laughing. It was growing dark, which reminded us that we had no light. We had thought of cigars and whisky, but other important elements of comfort we had forgotten, and, as the village was some distance and the rain was coming down in torrents, we determined to make the best of it.

We had to forego tea, and solaced ourselves with our pipes. In a cupboard I found a bit of candle in a rusty candlestick. In the coal cellar we found enough coal—left by the previous tenant—to make a fire, and, as I had bought an anthracite stove, and it was anthracite coal that we found, we got out the stove, set it in the middle of the room, and tried for an hour or so to light it.

"You don't expect to light slate, do you?" my brother asked, sarcastically.

"This kind of coal is all right when it does light," I replied, for I began to remember stories about it.

The rain had cleared, and the moon shone brightly, and at my brother's suggestion we decided to take a turn round the grounds. I slammed the door of the stove to, and followed him out.

We inspected the buildings, and certainly it seemed a very suitable and pretty place for our venture, and we returned with raised spirits to the house, to find on

entering a splendid fire in the stove which never went out for several months, as by regulating the draughts and dampers we could let it down, and then if we wished we could have a hot fire in a few minutes—they are wonderful things are those anthracite stoves. As my brother amused himself unwinding the wet straw from the legs of one of the cane-bottomed chairs, I had the curiosity to inspect a basket that I did not remember ordering. On a tag was written, "This may be useful.—MARY HILL."

"I feel deuced hungry," remarked my brother. "This climate must agree with me, or else it's the sea voyage and getting away from those gas burners."

"Corn in Egypt!" I shouted, as I opened the hamper.

"What's up?"

"Don't light that pipe. Look, here's a bottle of champagne, a pigeon pie, serviettes, butter, cheese, rolls, coffee, and milk in a tin."

If you have no mother to look after you in a strange land, thank Heaven if you have a lady friend who has boys of her own and a warm heart. Never do I remember a present that came in more opportunely, or one that was more appreciated.

We soon uncovered the legs of another chair, secured a table from the collection of furniture the place contained, and before we knew it we had the cloth spread and a capital supper, to which, by the light of the bit of candle, we did ample justice, but not before we drank the health of that kind-hearted English lady who had sent it—she who had done so much to make my life happy during my stay in the States, this little thought only being one among many instances of her tender solicitude. She was dying when I last saw her, as she said, "with everything to live for." All her enquiries were about the

success of our scheme. Of herself she said scarcely more than I have chronicled. Her husband never got over her death. He roused himself when at business, but as he left his head sunk on his breast, and he soon followed her.

We dried some blankets and a mattress—or thought we did—and after some coffee and a smoke we decided to “go to bed,” as the candle had gone out. We had ceased talking, and were both dropping off to sleep, when we heard a sound of footsteps prowling round the house. This drove the sleep out of me and my brother also. We got out our revolvers and loaded them. When we looked out the moon had set, and it was dark. On the outside of the piazza we both thought we could discern two men creeping round the house.

“Who's there?” I shouted.

The men appeared to make for the pine trees.

“If you don't answer I shall fire,” I repeated.

There was no answer, so I fired, and the object moved quickly out of sight.

We returned, and just got off to sleep when we heard the crash of someone falling outside the door. We listened for a further sound, but all was still, and we fell into a doze and slept till morning. When we opened the front door we found the dead body of a horse. It was customary for people there, when a horse became too old for service, to turn it loose on the road to either pick up a living or die, and as we had not closed the gate on the road, the poor creature had by instinct come at night to the first habitation it could find access to. It was this horse that had been prowling round the house which we had mistaken for two crouching men. Instead of getting on with our own work it took us the best part of next day to remove and bury that dead horse—lively work that

was, and enough to take the energy out of anybody not used to manual labour.

I had saved and made a good bit of money in business, and the farm soon became alive with carpenters and others getting up fowl houses and putting the place in order generally. It was a tremendous labour, I know that, and at the end of the day we were so tired that we could not walk down to the barn, and the work instead of getting less grew more heavy.

The domestic aspect of affairs bothered us; we could not have one servant, and we did not want to hire two, even if we could have got them. Ours was not a situation that was eagerly sought after, and in America servants are not so easy to procure. A German woman who had married an Irish platelayer, not liking to let a chance of making a little money go begging, offered her services, of which she had a not too modest estimate, judging from the salary she asked.

We engaged her, and as she could only come occasionally twice a week, we bought new cups, saucers, and plates when we dirtied those we used, and stowed them in a separate room. When the German woman came, she said as she saw the room full of crockery, "Mein Gott!"

How that woman would talk! She didn't say that we were a parcel of fools, but she implied it, and the way she would brag about a hen she had, and a goose, which she always called a "jeese," was sickening.

"Ah, you poys vas besser and you vas married like me. Dere vas meine schwester lif in der faterland, and der freund of mein husband vant a vife. Me say, Vy not haf meine schwester in Germany? She vill make you a good vife and you get on like steam.

Den der freund of mein husband say, All right, and she and him get along splendid, only I haf no more schwesteren."

We thanked her for her desire to supply us with wives, but said we would prefer to choose for ourselves.

Nearly everybody in that New Jersey village had something to sell. One, I remember, sold us a hand plough. It is a nice name, "hand plough," is it not? But oh! when you try it, especially if you are the one who enacts the horse! Farmer Field, who sold it to us, report gave out, used it in conjunction with a nigger that he had, which may be true, but no two brothers, accustomed in their youth to delicate nurture, would ever put up with a hand plough for more than ten minutes if they took it in turn to drag it. After a short experience of ploughing by hand we got a horse plough and a horse, and we discovered that ploughing is not so easy as it looks, and there is talent in making a straight furrow.

When we had made the furrow one of us would stand at one end with the basket of seed potatoes and throw them to the other, and when you get well across a field the potatoes are apt to sting your hand, and I am doubtful whether this method acts beneficially on the future growth of the potato. I grew some splendid cucumbers and sent them to the village greengrocer, who gave me the equivalent of three halfpence for them, after which I adopted a plan that I wonder is not done more in England when cucumbers get over-ripe, and that is to fry them in fat. This reminds me of the oyster plant we grew, which, when fried, you could not tell from an oyster. Why do these things take so long to come into use here?

To return to our chickens. Our fame as chicken men spread, and as long as we were not asked to do

more than to talk about fowls we were all right, and at our "evenings" we had quite an audience of neighbouring farmers who had hitherto looked upon a hen as a hen and a cock as a rooster, whereas our discourse had the effect of making them feel that a hen was an oviparous biped that had to be treated with reverence; in fact, in a minor degree, the hen was to be worshipped as a Brahmin will worship a bull.

I could not help thinking of Max Adeler's stories and Frost's pictures as the neighbours strolled round to talk "hens." We didn't forget to bring out refreshment and cigars under those pine trees round the house, and so we became popular. As far as theory was concerned we were, as I say, safe, but when a farmer brought round a "rooster" and told us its legs were swelling and left it to be cured, our position became serious. With the "rooster" before us on the table we got out our gallinaceous library to try and find out what was the matter with it. We concluded that it had elephantiasis and doctored it accordingly. Elephantiasis is a small insect that breeds under the scales on the leg of a fowl, causing it to become abnormally large. To cure this we had to rub an ointment on the scales which causes them to fall off, and with them the insect blight. We rubbed in the ointment and off came the scales, when we discovered that the bird without the supporting scales could not stand. We had just made this discovery when there was a knock at the door, and the man came in to know how the rooster was getting on. My brother rammed it under the table and said "splendidly," adding that it was now in the convalescent home, when the man left. What a time those scales took to grow! and how pale the bird's comb became under our treatment! We put the owner off from time to time. As the scales grew we stood the bird up and taught it to

walk, as though it were a child, which, after subjecting it to a lighter diet, it was able to do with the aid of the now budding scales. We did not know what to do about its comb till I thought of painting it, which I did, and I must say that when the owner came, the cock, with its new legs and bright red comb supplied by my oil colour box and a Naples yellow bill from the same source, looked the picture of health. After that we made a small charge for curing fowls and were never troubled with another invalid bird.

We learnt that German women were much like others, and our dish-washer left us at the mandate of approaching maternity, if such a phrase be not too ornate for a book of this character, and we were again left "without a servant." A young Englishman who worked for us said that he would come with his wife, and she would do for us in return for the use of two rooms. When they got fairly settled we didn't know on Sundays whether we had the house or they. They had crowds of friends who came from their smaller houses in shoals to enjoy an outing among the pines on the hill upon which our house was built. They brought their own tea and cake; in fact, this was a condition of the invitation; our boarders supplied the cups and saucers, plates, etc., which they could easily do as we had a room full of crockery. They played games, and took no notice of us whatsoever as we hid away in an out-of-the-way corner smoking in our shirt-sleeves. This went on till his wife got seriously ill, and was one night carried away to her mother's. About this time my health began to give way, and my assistance to my brother became less and less. Nothing, however, daunted my brother. He read his Carlyle and the struggles of Dominie Sampson nightly, until we got as theoretical on the subject of labour as the sage of Chelsea himself; in fact, I think

the effect of Carlyle on experimental poultry farming by men of education in a new country is pernicious. We read parts of it to our head man, who was as hard a working man as the world contained, and he saw nothing in it.

The different fancy fowls which we had procured from all parts of America were kept in the underground houses, in which they all prospered, but when we tried to sell them at fancy prices we were met with a lack of response that was crushing.

This set me thinking, and I remembered an Iberia irrigation company in which my father had shares which failed on the same grounds as we did with fancy fowls, for this company built stone canals through Iberia, arguing that with irrigation the Spaniards could grow the finest crops in the world if they used water. The Spaniards could have done so, but, being Spaniards, they were too improvident and too lazy, and would only buy the water to save their crops at time of famine, and this failure to estimate accurately what the Spaniard would do ruined hundreds of English widows and clergymen who had responded to a glowing prospectus. In the same manner we suffered by the same lack of enterprise on the part of the New Jersey farmer, who preferred to go on as he had done. Many enterprises fail just because one point has been overlooked, and, as we had overlooked it, we had no profitable sale for fowls—a strain, I think, is the correct term—that would materially improve the egg-laying quality of the neighbouring poultry. The experience of the Spanish irrigation company was our experience—neither people would invest for a future benefit.

We discovered that there was a good demand for spring chicken or young fowls at the hotels, so we determined to breed for that market, which we did.

We tried a French plan of hatching eggs with turkeys, but though the turkey is indigenous to America, those we secured were so wild that we had nothing but disappointment. For this you require turkeys that are like pets, that you can handle, and then they make capital incubators, being ready to sit at any time. In sitting them with hens it was curious how they would rob the hens' nests near them in order to have more eggs for their own. In very hot weather the hens would stay off the nest for half the day, which at first rather alarmed us; but we found that we could trust to Nature. We solved the problem of how to produce young birds by buying an electrical incubator that held 750 eggs, and then, when hatched, rearing the chickens under glass. In one building we had the incubator, and from this a long glass house divided into pens for the chicks, each pen being supplied with artificial mothers suitable for the sized chicks which inhabited them, those just hatched, of course, going into the first, those as large as big pigeons being killed and sent to market. Raising chicks in this way made them very tender, and, of course, unfit to breed from; but, as they were only raised to be eaten, this did not matter. Children attended to the wants of the little birds, and we bred cats to live with the chicks to keep off the rats. Continual clucking made our throats so sore that we called the chicks with whistles, which they came out to. This form of chicken raising when I have time I shall try in England, and see if it cannot be made profitable. Some so-called authorities on poultry scoff at the idea of it being made to pay. But they have told me that a cock will not crow if it cannot raise its head, but, as I have seen one crow with its head on the ground, I do not accept as gospel all they say.

We had carried the enterprise to a point where it began to pay, when I grew so ill that the pater came out to take me home. I was in a wretched state of mind, having lost nearly all my savings, which loss was aggravated by the fever I caught living so near the brook in a new country. Thinking I should never want my dress suit again, I left all my luggage behind, and walking down to the station with my father, made an undignified return home. My brother continued the business for some time, and then, finding it too much alone, and the funds being exhausted, he gave it up, but remained in the States, where he has married and settled down. He came to London recently for a brief stay, and made a hit in the "Cat and the Cherub."

We came back by the French line to Havre. The ice was thick on the rigging and deck when we came aboard—a dismal embarkation. I remember the officers and sailors all seemed to be dressed for an operatic performance, and they posed about with an eye for effect. "If I get drowned it will serve me right for trusting my life with such a set of theatrical marines," I said; but, notwithstanding my prejudice, we were landed safely in Havre. What surprised me was to find men and women busy at their allotments, with spring salad and greens almost ready to gather. In New Jersey the frost wipes off every blade of grass and vegetation, and so I had left it, and the difference was wonderful.

From Havre in a small steamer we crossed to England. On arrival home I found that things had not been going so smoothly. Eton Lodge had been sold, and we were all temporarily fixed in one of my father's small houses, all of which did not tend to raise my spirits; in fact, it seemed as though chaos

were come again, when I thought of the home they had left.

I made up my mind then to do something for which I had ability. I should have preferred that my ability had been commercial and not artistic, but now I find that art supplies my greatest and most inexpensive pleasures. So all is for the best.

For some time the fever and ague made me such an invalid that I could attempt nothing. I would go out for a walk, and suddenly become so weak that I could not crawl home. I remember going up in the gallery of a London theatre with a younger brother, and shivering with the ague while those about me were mopping their faces. "Come now, you ain't cold," a man next to me said, seeing me with my coat buttoned up and shuddering, for I felt as though we were at the North Pole and I was in my pyjamas. When the play was over I rushed to the chemist's and had a good dose of quinine, and after a rest got to the station. The chills and fever, or fever and ague, each year became milder, and now a bodily echo of the trouble is all that reminds me I once had it.

About this time I fell in love with my present wife, and this and chills and fever made me decide to remain in England.



Back in England.

WHAT to do for a living was the question which I had to solve. Here again my pencil was my friend, for I found employment designing valentines for Mr Eugene Rimmel, in the Strand, which supplied me with funds while I tried to get an engagement on the stage. As I wanted to be paid for my services, that was no easier then than it is now. Why should a man without training expect in a pleasant occupation

like acting to be paid when in other businesses he would have to serve an apprenticeship or pay a premium? I did; but then I am not a reasonable being. What a lot of people I saw, and how I believed the specious promises theatrical folk think it necessary to make, only to find out that they had no intention of fulfilling them. How much better would it be to say at once that they can do nothing for you, and leave you to try elsewhere without loss of time. But this plan, I suppose, would make an actor manager unpopular, and he dare not adopt it—there is a reason for everything.

I have come up from the country by special appointment to the Gaiety Theatre, and the then manager has walked out of the front entrance and left as I applied at the stage door. What sense is there in treating people this way?

There is a lot of luck in theatrical matters, though, of course, it depends upon the individual whether he takes advantage of it, and some of the wildest shafts hit home. I wrote first to Mrs Swanborough, at the Strand Theatre, and received a reply asking me to call at once. This, at the time, seemed to me, in the plenitude of my inexperience, what should happen; now that I should have received such an answer surprises me—but again there is a reason for everything. Marius had been taken suddenly ill, and the management were at their wits' end for a substitute. Mrs Swanborough received me very kindly, and, had she not been talked out of it, she would have engaged me. Mr and Mrs Swanborough believed in their own judgment of men and women, and recruited their company by engaging clever people and bringing them to London, or from inferior theatres to their own. Thorne, David James, Terry, Marius, Cox, W. H. Vernon, poor Terriss, and Lady

Bancroft owe their position, in a greater or less degree, to the Swanborough management, when the Strand heard many a hearty laugh over the burlesques, then the light entertainment that the public ran after. Cox lived in the same house that I did in New York while playing there, and would always, when coming home late at night, wake me up and argue with me that I had got into his room by mistake. He regularly apologised for his conduct the next morning. Thorne I met the other day at the Palace Theatre ; Marius I saw a good deal of in Johannesburg, worried with the cares of George Edwards' opera company, and looking very ill. He died on his way home from South Africa. The last I saw of Edward Terry was when I cycled over some time ago about a play I think of doing for him. He got a morning's work out of me in the garden making a fernery to please the eyes of the tennis players, for which services he paid me in cucumber, which I saw him cut. When I saw how he handled garden tools I said, "Why, the papers said you were an expert horticulturist!" "Their reporter must have been looking over the palings and seen one of the gardeners," replied Terry, with a grim smile as he planted a root he had bought the previous Saturday when playing at the Borough Theatre. Vernon I constantly meet at the Savage Club, and Terriss I was sometimes privileged to gaze upon from the train when it emptied itself of talent and beauty at Bedford Park.

"What a nice voice he has!" argued Mrs Swanborough with Vernon and some others in an adjoining room ; "I am sure that he would do very nicely."

The old lady's advocacy, however, proved itself powerless against their arguments, which, being in a lower key, I could not hear. Perhaps it was as well,

for, judging by their effect, they could not have been flattering or conducive to my advancement.

"If my husband had been alive it would have been different," she said, and offered me as a solace a seat to see the play "Our Club." Marius' part was read by a young man, who, being employed in the theatre, knew something about it, or about the "business," as we term what has to be learnt in addition to the words. I saw Penley for the first time, and he had, it struck me, the quality of impressing an audience with his strange personality. "What a horribly disagreeable man," exclaimed a young lady sitting near; "I should not care to know a man like that." I suppose she is a matronly woman now, and if she be alive and happen to read these pages I should like to assure her that if she were to visit the Vineries at Woking, she would not only find Mr Penley not disagreeable, but a charming host, who, with his wife, cannot do too much for anyone staying with them. This is the history of my first attempt at going on the stage.

Mrs German Reed.

By introduction I next had an interview with Mrs German Reed, whose Ariel my father was never tired of praising, when, as Miss Priscilla Horton, she took a past generation of playgoers by storm. I called at the Gallery of Illustrations and was asked to wait on the stage, which I did. After a few moments Mrs Reed came down the steps of a bathing machine that formed part of the scene for the evening's performance. To see an aristocratic old lady warily descending the steps of a bathing machine was so different an entrance from what I had pictured that I could not help smiling. She alluded to it as she

shook hands. "That is my dressing-room in reality, and I was just putting it straight for to-night; come and let us sit down and tell me all about your plans."

We chatted, and then she asked me to do something, and I sat down at the piano in the orchestra and sang, and also recited, at the end of which she advised me to give an entertainment, and not be at the beck and call of managers. This was good advice, but I did not follow it till years after. Corney Grain came out with a pen in his mouth and cheques and bills in his hands, looking like a well occupied and well fed cashier. He expressed regret that he had been too busy signing cheques to come and hear me, and departed. He seemed very proud of his clerky labours, but I was disappointed. I should have thought that he would have been at the piano with a sheet of manuscript music and a note book, writing fresh witticisms to delight the public; but busy drawing cheques for the gas, advertisements, new chair covers, charwomen's salary, etc., was a blow to my preconceived notions of the dignity of art. I remember a remark Corney Grain made to me afterwards when I knew him better and used to show him water-colour drawings and talk art with a big A. "My dear Ganthony, you should be more practical; unless you are business-like and make money, your æstheticism will only get you laughed at."

At German Reed's they said that if they had only known me before they engaged Arthur Sketchly to read his "Mrs Brown" sketches, I should have been there; which is very nice, but, like Hamlet and capons, I can't live promise-crammed. I met Arthur Cecil, and he threw cold water on all my hopes; in fact, quite dispirited me. "It is no good; they will only give you an old man in a farce." My reply

was, "If I were to listen to you I should go and lie down in that gutter and die." He came behind the scenes at the Lyceum when I was playing Bullamore in one of Pinero's first successes, "Daisy's Escape," and I said, "Here I am playing the old man in a farce." Later, when he was at Aberdeen, *en route* with Mr Hare to Balmoral to play before the Queen, he came to the theatre where I was giving the Sketching Entertainment, and was very enthusiastic. We were very friendly ever afterwards up to his death. Dear, dear, how many seem to have died whom these recollections call to memory! He was the only actor who attended all the picture galleries that I know of—an extraordinary fact to relate of a body that should be enthusiastic for art in every guise.

Samuel Phelps.

A FRIEND of my father's knew this great actor, who received me very kindly. He heard me recite, and said I could do "*serious business*," an expression I did not quite understand. The old man then walked up and down the room, with the poker held to his back by his arms, like a trussed fowl, asking me to notice how erect he was. I did notice it, which in a man of his age I thought remarkable. He told me that when he next appeared I should be in his company. I went to see him again, to recite something he wanted to hear. Instead of being dressed in a frock coat, handsome tie, and jewelled pin, natty boots, etc., he received me in a dressing gown, and seemed to have taken no care of his appearance. I looked on this as a compliment until I began to recite, when he took the words out of my mouth and allowed me to do nothing, and kept forgetting why I had called. This last interview was

a painful one, and not knowing what to do, I took my leave.

I heard nothing more from him, but seeing statements in the papers that he was going to appear again I went down to Epping Forest, where I knew he was staying. I saw his daughter, and learnt, to my surprise and sorrow, that the news of his re-appearance was not only unauthorised, but had had a very injurious effect on the old actor's health. The announcements, which were the work of an agent, had alarmed Mr Phelps in his then nervous state to such an extent that he died from the shock.

This was the sad ending to my first theatrical engagement.



Charles Calvert.

I FIRST met Mr and Mrs Calvert at Lady —'s, who made me out such a genius that I told her I should be had up for swindling, but she always replied, "You must tell fibs about people nowadays."

In meeting people socially, you get early information as to what they intend doing; when the papers mention it, everything is settled. Lady — told me that Mr Calvert's new play, "The Golden Bubble," had a part in it that would suit me—that of a French nobleman, who, when ruined, accepts a servant's position in the hero's house. She handed me the engagement.

If I speak of Calvert to the present generation of young actors, they say "Which one?" understanding me to refer to some of his sons now on the stage, and doing very well. The Calvert who gave me a start was Charles Calvert, who was known for his remarkable productions of Shakespeare at Manchester, a man with sound ideas of dramatic art and refined feelings, an

actor who would talk generally of art, and not always of the amount to be made by this and that theatrical speculation. I was engaged at two pounds a week to play Baron D'Oriflame in "The Golden Bubble," by Selous, the author of "True to the Core," and, I believe, a member of the Stock Exchange.

With my engagement paper was a gavotte which, in the character of a servant baron, I was to play upon the piano.

It seemed quite enough to me for an amateur to play an important part at our chief provincial theatres without adding a performance on the piano. I wrote and said that I could not play the piano well enough, but all the reply I got was that I must play the piano. Oh, how I worked at that gavotte! I did not mind the part a bit, but that gavotte haunted me. I suggested that I should play it on the flute or violin, which I understood, but this was refused, as I afterwards found, because Mr Calvert's son William intended to play the flute with me.

A few days before the production we assembled at the Theatre Royal, Birmingham, for rehearsal. In the train going down there was a man who seemed to imagine himself a wit, but who was only foolishly funny—at least so it struck me. When I was securing my luggage he saw my name on it and said, "Oh, you're one of the company; I'll show you the way to the theatre. This man will bring your 'props' and he might as well take this for me." I did not know what he meant by "props," but I could discern that he intended to have his luggage conveyed to the theatre at my expense, which conjecture was soon afterwards verified. Why do these men with such a talent for saving money never attain any position?

As we walked to the theatre, he told me that he was a Marquis, adding in response to my stare of

inquiry and surprise, "In the production, I mean." He then brought out his part, which looked very greasy and dog-eared, and, pointing to the name "Monsieur Façade," asked me how it was pronounced. "This little screw thing means something," (the cedilla), "it looks so damned ignorant not to know, and it riles the guv'nor."

It did seem to me to show ignorance, and I was a little staggered that a member of a profession which I believed was composed of students should ask such a question. There are a better class of men ousting the old mummer off the boards nowadays, but the indifferent aristocrat who takes to acting because it appears to him a profession that requires less labour and gains more applause than any other, is as bad if not worse.

In our private theatricals we always came to rehearsal dressed in our easiest costumes, clothes that we did not mind spoiling with the dirt of the theatre, but, at a professional rehearsal, everyone seemed got up for the occasion—carefully brushed tall hats, gloves, flowers in buttonholes, patent leather boots, etc. In a serge suit and billycock I felt myself a blot on the fair assembly.

The chief actors mumbled their words and gave the cue very loudly, so that any chance of knowing what the play was about, or what reference one part bore to the complete whole, was impossible.

"We shall know all about it after the first night," my Marquis friend told me.

When I enquired if we should have a dress rehearsal I was asked if I thought I was with a lot of blooming amatoors.

There was no dress rehearsal; the consequence was that when I drew my sword the scabbard fell on the floor, the sword being the only thing that had kept it

in its place. This made a titter, and marred a serious scene, and demonstrated the folly of not having a dress rehearsal.

By going to Stinchcombe, the costumier, I selected the best dress for myself, one of black velvet and violet facings, the two other dresses being blue and red. I had mine fitted to me and it looked very well, but when we stood on the stage I could see that the black dress was evidently intended for the Marquis, and the two loud coloured garments for the two improvident noblemen, loud coloured garments being indicative of prodigality as black velvet is of respectability. I knew nothing about the play when I made my choice, so simply selected the one I thought the most gentlemanly, and so deprived the Marquis of a chance of securing that dignity of which he stood so much in need.

The gavotte was a failure, not through me as I anticipated, but because young Calvert broke down with his flute solo, which he should not have done as he is an excellent performer. If the music had been left to us I should have proposed a flute duet, "Non giova il sospira" or some short melodious duet of Donizetti's, with a picicatto accompaniment from the band.

After the first night the grand piano—a cumbersome thing to have behind the scenes—was dispensed with, and I was told that on the following night I must use a guitar, of which instrument I knew nothing. By good luck there was a guitar player in the band, who showed me the chords and helped me to arrange a little song which I wrote in French, and sang on the second night, after which the gavotte was a thing of the past.

On Tuesday, "The Golden Bubble" having proved a failure, I was handed the part of Launcelot Gobbo

and told that we should rehearse "The Merchant of Venice" on Wednesday, and play it in the evening. I set to work to study the part at once in a state of alarm, and learnt it, including the fifth act. With what withering scorn the stage manager rebuked me when I told him that I had studied the fifth act. "The fifth act is never played—we always finish with the trial scene. You ought to know that." "The fifth act is a beautiful act, and should be played," I replied, but he closed the conversation by telling me that he didn't want to be taught his business by an amateur. Strangely enough, a few years later I played Stephano in the fifth act at the Lyceum, and Johnstone, who is sufficiently diplomatic and decorous a comedian not to cause the Lyceum audiences to laugh unduly, repeated the lines I had been rebuked for having learnt at Birmingham. I may have been wrong about how "The Merchant of Venice" should be played, but I have this comforting reflection: Sir Henry Irving shares my views on the subject.

Though I do not believe in altering plays for the sake of a new reading, yet, when conviction warrants a change, I do dissent against the fanatical adherence to old business on the stage which characterised the management in the provinces a few years back, because this business was originally an innovation, and was in many cases capable of being improved upon, in some instances by omitting it altogether.

On Friday "King Lear" was put on, and I played Oswald and soon came to words with the stage manager.

When Kent says of Oswald, "His countenance likes me not," I made the coxcomb Oswald look at himself in his sword blade to see what was the matter. I don't reason out a character, but, by becoming familiar with what he says, become that character,

and this action was what I felt, as Oswald, that he would do.

I do not say that this is a high form of study, and such an actor will play very well parts that suit him, and be very bad, as I am, in parts that do not.

Leaving Birmingham, we went to Manchester and all the big towns, playing a variety of pieces. Meeting my chief in the street, he stopped me and said, "Well, here you are, a full-blown comedian." At Newcastle I made a hit in Toots, making him near-sighted ; in fact, he became so popular, that the wife of one of the actors in the company tried in every way to spoil my laughs by coming in late, and other petty tricks. I argued that it was a pity to spoil legitimate laughter, as the more successful the play, the better for all in it, but to no purpose.

At this time Mr Calvert's memory began to go, as Mr Phelps' had done, and the business, not being as good as usual, worried him. If the house was poor it was painful to hear him exclaim, "Have they forgot me?" He would come to me in mental agony when playing Cardinal Wolsey, and say, "Every boy in the audience knows that speech" (his great speech), "and if I miss a word they will notice it." His son William, though playing a part himself, would always contrive to be at the wings with the book to give him the word if he wanted it. But it was nevertheless a painful experience. His wife, Mrs Charles Calvert, joined us, so as to be near him. Every part she played she played well, and I was not surprised to see her really clever work recently as Mrs Jauncy in "A White Elephant," and subsequently in "Saucy Sally."

The last character Mr Calvert played was Captain Cuttle, in "Dombey & Son," at the Gaiety Theatre, Glasgow, and the last words he spoke on the stage were to me as Toots.

We continued at the Gaiety under Mr Bernard's management, playing a round of pieces, and doing so well that we resolved to continue on tour on our own account, as Mr Calvert's case became so bad that no hope was entertained of his ever coming back to the stage again.

At the end of three weeks, our chief being no better, the company was dismissed. Then, like theatrical companies, they began to talk over what had happened, and to consider that they had been wronged, and that they should have had a fortnight's notice.

Mrs Calvert said, "Very well," and arranged for a fortnight at Preston. My part was sent to me, and as I was on my honeymoon, and the part was easily learnt, being only "The child is saved," I thought I should be in plenty of time if I got down on the day of the performance. When I arrived at the theatre a letter was handed to me giving me a fortnight's notice. A similar letter had damped all their spirits. What else could they expect from a lady anxious to return to her dying husband's bedside—a lady to whom they had shown no consideration in her distress?

I found that I was a soldier by my costume, which I hung up in my dressing-room, and went and looked for lodgings. At night I did not come on till the end of the play, but when I did, with the girl in my arms, and said, "The child is saved," the house shouted and applauded in a way that took me by surprise. I asked a stage carpenter what it meant. He said, "Well, sir, there's two things made your lines fetch 'em—they've been a trying to murder that little 'un through three acts and a prologue, and the kid's a great favourite in Preston."

A few days later it was my painful duty to

announce Mr Calvert's death from the stage in front of the curtain at the Preston Theatre, which the audience received with sympathy and sorrow.

Stranded in Preston, the company determined to go on, and, calling ourselves "Charles Calvert's Company," which we had been, we got a date on share at Southport, and played in the Winter Gardens, the theatre at that time not having been built. The company shared the takings, each receiving pay in proportion to his late salary. This was called a "commonwealth," and, as under this form of government the first thing was to please the public and fill the treasury, I was given good parts; though, when the stage manager took Mr Calvert's place under Mr Bernard, he allotted me the smallest parts he could find. We played "The Serious Family," which was probably taken from "The Colonel." At Southport we had good audiences, and made a little money. From Southport we went to Bradford, where, as William Calvert had to attend to his father's funeral, I was asked at a short notice to play Henri in "The Ladies' Battle." I was given the part, and told that I could easily procure the dress at the theatre. I learnt as much of the part as I could in the train, and it was well that I did so, as no dress was to be had at the theatre, so I had to "fake" one by turning a frock coat into a groom's livery. I sewed on silver buttons which I bought in the market place, made tops to fit on to my patent leather boots, and at last got something which gave a vague suggestion of what I should have worn. The "faking" of this costume had taken all the afternoon, and with a brief run through I had to go on for this leading juvenile part. To add to our troubles, there was no one to play Leonie. At the last moment a friend of the stage manager's, who used to act, but

was at the time engaged as a dressmaker, was induced to leave her sewing machine and play the part, with which she was absolutely unfamiliar, but which she intended to "wing"—that is, learn each scene before she went on to play it.

I never could have conceived anyone more unlike the heroine of Scribe and Legouves' delicate and artificial comedy. She was a large woman, with an ample and constantly-heaving bosom, unrestricted by the adoption of a soiled, low-necked ball dress and bare arms, whose florid colouring was brought to a sudden termination by a pair of cheap one-button white kid gloves. Her hair, which was black and oily, fell in greasy sausage curls upon her shoulders, where, by the way, there was plenty of room for them. To this actress-dressmaker I had to make speeches of passionate adoration, expatiating upon her personal loveliness in terms of exaggerated poetic compliment, which were not calculated to impress the audience with a belief in the trustworthiness of my taste or judgment. In fact, when she bounded on, and, kissing her one-buttoned gloved hand, said, "'Ullo, 'Enry!" a salutation not in the text, the words left me, and I never felt such a fool in my life. When I recalled them I dared scarcely say them to the object before me, much less utter them with conviction or feeling, as the better I acted, the more absurd the situations became. What a relief it was when she used up what she had "swallowed" of the part and, waving her hand, said, "Ta! ta!" and left me. Fancy Leonie de Villigontier saying "Ta! ta!" Next day the newspaper critic said that he could not agree with my "reading" of the part. I didn't read the part, or the audience would have heard more of the dialogue. As the critic sold stamps at the post office, I told him, when cashing a money order my father had

sent me (a proceeding circumstances made necessary), exactly what had happened. He said, which was quite true, that as the critic supposed I was on tour with the part he criticised it on this belief. I pitied the awful slating the dressmaker got, as, poor woman, she had come down to help a friend out of good nature and attempted that for which she was unfitted, as, in a measure, I had myself, and like myself she had not had a fair chance. To add to the trouble, the stage manager's wife was put down on the bills for Leonie, but at the last moment played the Countess. We tried to keep all the papers away from her, but the genius of the stage door keeper baffled us —he thought she would like to see the notice about the lady he supposed to be her rival and handed it her, and wasn't there a row about her reputation!

Our visit to Bradford led to financial straits, and rings and watches were pawned to get to the next town in the hope and belief that things would be better there. We played anything and everything on which there were no author's fees. I remember one man we engaged always "made up" again before he went home, which roused my curiosity. He told me frankly that he did it to avoid arrest. As he usually left disguised as a scene shifter with the men employed at the theatre, he was never caught.

When playing in "Black-Eyed Susan" an actor came from Manchester to play a sailor's part; I forget what, but I know that instead of giving me any cues, he said in a very loud voice when he saw me, "Avast there and belay, you lubber! Haul in your spanniker and bring to, or, shiver my timbers! I'll bust you on the water mark with the butt end of a deck mop, you son of a sea cook," etc. I asked him why he did not say what was in his part?

"Oh! I always play sailors that way," he replied,

and dismissed the matter as being unworthy of discussion.

In this play I doubled the Captain, with, I think, Snodgrass. We had run things late one night, and the manager cut out an entire scene without informing those who were to go on in it as I was, previous to changing to the Admiral. Seeing that the play had passed my last Snodgrass scene, and that I should soon be wanted as the Admiral, I rushed to my dressing-room to put on my naval outfit, when, to my horror, I found it had been removed. With the aid of the dresser I found the wardrobe mistress at a neighbouring "pub," got the things, and reached my room as the call boy was there to say that the stage was waiting for me. I said I would be there directly. I don't know what they interpolated, but they kept it going till the Admiral arrived. "Oh, I begs your pardin'," said the wardrobe mistress, "but I thought as how you had done with them, they was folded up so neat." I never folded anything I intended using after that.

Another instance of my costume disappearing shows the manners of some actors. In one scene we had to appear in evening dress, but when I looked for mine it was gone! I discovered it on the stage on the back of an actor who had a difficulty as to what he should do for a dress suit, and solved it by appropriating mine, leaving me to go to that stage ball in a serge jacket and check trousers.

When with Mr Calvert we finished up at Oldham and opened the following Monday at Leicester, instead of going with the company by train, I decided to ride to Leicester on my bicycle—an "Ordinary." I slept at Buxton on Sunday, after racing a dog-cart in the dark down a hill, which I remember as a steep one, into the town. I had

dinner at an hotel on Monday. The proprietor's wife had always desired to meet an actor, so I in a measure gratified her ambition when I appeared in her husband's clothes while mine were being dried. Near Loughborough, as it was pouring, and not a soul or a house to be seen, I rode on the path. Two men in a butcher's cart passed me when I stopped for something, and, to my surprise, at the next village they were waiting for me with a constable. I was stopped and my name demanded for "riding on the path." I gave my name and what I was, but this they didn't believe, so I was locked up in an empty shop that was "to let," while they went off to the telegraph station to wire to Mr Calvert to see if what I had stated were true. Time was getting on, and I grew alarmed as they were so long gone. A French priest who was passing saw me through the shop window, and, taking compassion on me, spoke to me, through the letter-slit in the door, in French, in which language I replied. A village crowd listened to our conversation, but did not understand it. When I was at last released I lost no time in argument, but started off for Leicester as hard as I could go, fell on the greasy tram lines as I entered the town, and reached the theatre just in time to exchange my cycle suit for a square cut and silk stockings, silver-buckle shoes, and go on for my part. Calvert gave a look of surprise and gratification when he saw me enter, and during the course of the play I explained what had happened.

I heard nothing more about it till one night at Newcastle two gigantic officers, armed with thick sticks, came to arrest me. A summons had been sent to the Theatre Royal, Leicester, which I had not seen; the case had come on, and, as I had not attended, had gone against me. That being a hunting country where everybody hated bicycles, I was fined altogether

about four pounds for riding on a lonely country foot-path. There was excitement in the theatre, as no one knew for what I was to be arrested. The officers found out where I made my exit, and waited for me. I saw 'em at the wings, which might have prevented a nervous man leaving the stage with as hearty a laugh as the scene required. I asked the men why they didn't send a regiment of soldiers for me, and told them that I would call and see them on the morrow. I went out early next day with the bicycle, and seeing two working lads outside some small houses, I said to them, "Do you want to buy a bicycle—this one—for" (and I looked at my summons) "£3 15s?" One of the lads got on it and rode down the street, looked it over, and then went into the house and came out with the money and took the machine, whereupon I walked down to the police station and handed them the sum I had just received. That settled the matter. The paper reciting my crime I nailed on the "call-board," and let everyone know that the fine was greater than the misdemeanour.

The experiences I went through gave me good ideas of the vagabond side of professional life. When an actor tells you that he is going "hop-picking" to fill up his time in summer when engagements are scarce, it comes as a staggerer. The same man, however, when in a good engagement, will travel first class, wear expensive clothes, and live in a style that makes him a beggar when again "walking about." To drive a dog-cart and be summoned for a milk account does not seem to accord with my ideas of the science of reputable existence, but this inconsistency comes within the scope of my actual experience.

The Marquis and I shared our rooms together, and I found the plan work well, as he had a great

genius for marketing, and would walk miles to get a sheep's head a halfpenny cheaper than it could be procured in the neighbourhood. He would look after every item of food, which, though advantageous to me, disconcerted the plans of the lodging-house keepers with whom we lodged, and compelled them to adopt a method of obtaining their food by purchase, a method to which, from long disuse, they had become quite unaccustomed. When the daughter of the "Marquis" married, his son-in-law, who was a well-to-do business man, found him some other occupation, which enabled him to end his career in comfort.

A number of things happened which, as far as I know, have never been in print, but which I think make amusing reading.

At a small seaport a lady star actress of the third magnitude appeared as Juliet. "I cannot do justice to myself," she said to the manager, who combined theatrical enterprise with the conduct of a row of bathing machines, "if I do not have a lime" (lime-light) "thrown on me when I appear on the balcony."

"We ain't got no lime-light, Miss, but I think we could get you a ship's blue-light," replied the obliging manager; and to this the lady agreed. The lad who went to the shop to buy the blue-light brought back a signal rocket which was given him by mistake. The prompter was her own man, and in his ignorance took the rocket in good faith.

ROMEO. He jests at scars, who never felt a wound.

(Juliet appears. Prompter lights the match.)
But soft ! what light through yonder window breaks ?

(This was the match lighting the fuse.)
Arise, fair sun !

The sun, or rather the rocket, did rise with a hiss that sounded far louder in a theatre than it does in the

open air. Juliet was knocked off the balcony, the fly boarders were set on fire, and the theatre was filled with sulphurous smoke, while the audience, which was fortunately a small one, made a stampede to the doors. It is perhaps unnecessary to add that the introduction of the rocket brought the play to an end. Since then "Romeo and Juliet" has always been looked upon in that town as a dramatic work that could not be witnessed without considerable personal danger.

There was a lazy, loafing actor named Bridges who hung about theatres in the North in the hope, which was often realised, that some unforeseen accident would deprive the management of a member of the company at the eleventh hour. This man's inventive genius made him troublesome when a little under cordial influences. If he forgot his words, or the part he was playing ceased to interest him, he would exclaim suddenly, without any reference to the text, "There is no way but this!" and, flourishing a property dagger with which he was always provided, would stab himself to the heart and fall a lifeless corpse upon the stage, leaving the performers who still had the honesty to remain alive to get through and finish the act as they best could without him. In one play it was impossible to dispense with Mr Bridges' services, so to nullify the consequences of his rash act at the commencement of the drama, a short dialogue was introduced somewhat of this kind to account for his presence again on earth—

MELANO. And what of Don Velasquez? (this was Bridges).

DOCTOR PHILLIPPE. Well, thank Heaven.

MEL. Well, sayest thou? Report was current that he had attempted his own life. Oh, what an impious deed!

DOCTOR P. 'Twas most irreverent, and, alas, the wound was mortal, but such is the efficacy of the doctor's art that I, who happened to be passing at the time, arrived most providentially before life was extinct, brought my surgical knowledge to bear upon him, and he is now, happily, recovered—and, by our Lady, he comes this way.

Mr Bridges, who had been dissenting with all the worthy doctor had been saying while being held at the wings, was now pushed on to the stage and compelled to go through the performance for which he was paid.

Dying on the stage reminds me of an incident that happened in Edinburgh in a play in which I acted a negro part—"Jack Long of Texas" was, I think, the name of it. The plot resolves itself at last in the villain being shot and the hero and heroine being made happy ever afterwards. It will hardly be believed that the leading juvenile was so little acquainted with the play that he thought he had to die, whereas the stage direction was that the villain was killed. When the shot was fired that was to bring him happiness, instead of living and enjoying it he toppled over too, as though the bullet had passed through the villain and hit him. Aveling, who was playing the villain, was rolling on the stage with laughter (remarkable behaviour for a corpse), while the hero (also dead) was asking him angrily what he was laughing at? Not knowing what had happened, the heroine rushed in, exclaiming in a paroxysm of joy, "Ah! ah! my husband lives, he lives!" As she looked down and saw him and the other corpse arguing on their backs, a voice from the gallery called out, "No, 'e don't, Miss, 'cause he ain't learnt 'is lines," and the curtain fell to murmurs of discontent.

When playing "Hamlet," Polonius dropped his staff into Ophelia's grave, which accident would have passed unnoticed if a stage hand, who had just been reproved for inattention to mishaps which nightly occurred during the progress of the tragedy, had not seen it. With a determination to do his duty, he laid aside the dummy figure of Ophelia, which he had received in his arms when she was lowered to her last resting-place, and, seizing the staff or chamberlain's wand, handed it up through the open mouth of the grave to Ophelia's father, who ignored it for some time, but, as the wand followed him to whichever part of the grave he went, he at last took it with an oath and put an end to the laughter its vagaries had occasioned.

An absurd incident happened when Charles Calvert was playing, I think, "Henry the Fifth." A row of supers in shining armour stood in a line facing the audience, with their backs to a raking piece which gave a sloping exit down under the stage. After the king's entrance, one of the supers overbalanced himself backwards, and of course put out his arms to catch hold of his comrades, which he did as a drowning man will clutch at a straw, and they in their turn followed his example, the consequence being that the whole row fell backwards and disappeared below the stage with a noise that only tin armour can make. Such a command had Calvert over his audience that this *contre-temps* would have passed also had the men piled together below kept quiet, and not attempted to get up. First one and then the other began moving, till the clatter, and the enjoyment of the audience, who understood what was happening, necessitated the lowering of the curtain.

The Commonwealth got dates from the Princess's Theatre, Edinburgh, at the time M'Neil had it.

Here during three weeks I played Old Pete in "The Octoroon," Mr Grinnidge in "Green Bushes," and a lot of good parts. Mrs Charles Calvert joined us, we having engaged her. I remember her admirable performance of the Widow in "Nine Points of the Law," in which I played Rhodomont Rollingstone, the American. While I was on the stage the lights suddenly went out, and the audience, as there had been an explosion elsewhere recently, became restless. An actor knows what an audience feels without seeing it. Taking the torch from the prompter, I leisurely tried to light the footlights. As they did not respond, I said, "Wall, I can *gas* better than that myself," and proceeded to use the torch to my cigar, which I had smoked on the stage. It was not a great joke, but a bit of fun which, together with my coolness in lighting my cigar, possibly prevented a panic. We continued the play with candles until the gas man, who never should have left the building, was found and brought in, and put matters right.

Weather and everything favoured us during those three weeks at Edinburgh, and we made a great deal more than our salaries when we broke up and returned to London. Then we had so many parts that it was hardly possible to do more than commit the words to memory; now an actor plays one part for months, sometimes for years. In both cases the systems go to extremes, and are equally bad for the dramatic student.

Seeking a London Engagement.

THE great ambition of the provincial actor is to obtain a London engagement, and it became mine. A letter from Tom Taylor, the editor of *Punch*, to Mrs Bateman, procured me an interview. I called upon her at a large, melancholy house near the Euston Road and knocked in the various styles time permitted until I had exhausted my stock of "rat-tats," when the door was opened and I was greeted first by a strong odour of frying bacon, and secondly, by what I should be inclined to consider, from the various signs of labour to which her face, hands, and garments bore witness, a maid-of-all-work. I mentioned my name and business, and was shown into a large and somewhat depressing apartment, which I was allowed ample opportunity to study at my leisure.

When the old lady at length came in she said, with a certain grace of manner and an American accent—

"I am late, sir, but I was engaged at my breakfast."

"Is that all?"

"All, sir. I consider a proper time devoted to meals a paramount duty—a duty too often neglected. Time spent upon eating is not lost; the allotted span of life is abridged by undue haste, and is lengthened by a decorous and generous period accorded to eating, mastication, and digestion."

My appointment was for ten o'clock.

"And you come here to me to solicit an engagement. Our family have, as you know, greatly distinguished themselves on the stage. I am an American."

As I was seven years in America I guessed that.

" You do not imply that you consider I show any trace of my nationality in my speech, I hope?"

" American ladies are so much brighter than English ladies. When do you think you can offer me an engagement?"

" I am afraid that you do not approach this matter with a sufficient consciousness of what a London appearance means."

" Possibly," I replied. " I have, according to the phrenologists, no bump of reverence."

" There is no manager in London would offer you an engagement as I am doing. You do not know the influence and pressure that is nowadays brought to bear upon the managers of London theatres. Mr Taylor strongly advocates my engaging gentlemen who have talent, and you appear to have plenty of assurance" (that was one for me), " a very good substitute; and you, further, come armed with credentials from this friend of mine, and therefore I engage you, at two pounds per week, from the day we open. I have your address, and will wish you good morning."

I left the house in a happy frame of mind.

A few days afterwards I was in Bond Street with my wife, when I thought I would call in at Irving's place in Grafton Street and tell my friend, L. F. Austin (the well-known magazine writer), the news of my engagement. While we were talking Irving walked in, and I was introduced to him. He lounged on the table, and we chatted for some time about my provincial experiences and the sad end of poor old Charles Calvert. He asked me if I were engaged now, and took a kindly interest in my struggles, which may have recalled his own. What I liked about Irving was the utter absence of what other prominent actors were disfigured by, viz., a tendency

to pose off the stage—to continue in private life the business of the theatre. Irving spoke thoughtfully and modestly, and I found with him, as with Calvert, that I could talk of dramatic art, and not necessarily restrict myself to "theatrical business." If he spoke of a play it was as a play, not of the merits of the particular part he would enact himself. I asked him if he forgot the audience when he acted. He replied, "I try to," adding, "but I am so near-sighted that I cannot see them." My provincial experience with the company had been that, if I talked of plays or art, I was laughed down as a novice, and yet Irving spoke of these things as a matter of course.

I left Grafton Street with a glimpse of a different world until my wife, who had been kept waiting outside, brought me quickly back to life as it was, by a stern rebuke and an allusion to my lack of chivalry.

Soon after I had an offer for the Lyceum, and almost by the same post I received a letter from Mrs Bateman, saying that she could not offer me an engagement at her theatre. I considered the Lyceum settled, and went away into the country with my wife. While there my friend Austin wrote to ask me if I had a contract for the Lyceum, as it seemed by no means certain that I was to be in the company. I had written to Mrs Bateman, saying that on receipt of her letter I had accepted an engagement at the Lyceum. I had relied upon going to the Lyceum, and this doubt seemed such a terrible matter, that I left for town at once to settle it.

Owing to the strong advocacy of my friend Austin, the engagement was ratified. I had relinquished the one with Mrs Bateman, which I might have enforced, and this Irving saw. I am not in any way attaching blame to the Lyceum management—I should have

been more business like—but there must have been something in my claim or a contract would not have been given me. I consider nothing as settled now until I have the contract signed and stamped, and neither should you, reader, if you are in the theatrical or any other business.

When I mentioned my salary, Irving said, "He is worth more than that," and he gave it me. Very few managers or other employers would do this. I was nobody, and he never could have thought that the matter would be made public.

In provincial engagements I had good parts and bad clothes; at the Lyceum I had bad parts and splendid clothes. In the provinces my tights ran quickly to "ladders," my top-boots were faked, and the actor's art consisted in making modern clothes look like garments of another period—this aptitude for "faking" distinguishing the professional from the amateur more than anything that was done on the stage. At the Lyceum my clothes were made for me—a new experience in theatrical outfitting, our plan being usually to ransack the wardrobe of the house at which we were playing, or to go and borrow from the opposition theatre. I look back with astonishment and gratitude at the kindness shown me by provincial theatres on these occasions.

Not only were my clothes made for me and made to fit me, and not to fit everybody as heretofore, but my wigs, shoes, everything—and all this for Stephano in the "Merchant of Venice," a part of about five lines. The monotony of long runs is bad enough for principals who have good incomes and a nightly chance of advancing themselves in public favour, but to me, who had but an insignificant part and a lot of utility work, the monotony was unbearable. The continual changing of clothes and

"make up" to stand and listen as portion of the "crowd" was merely a mechanical duty. As one of the Jews in the trial scene in the "Merchant of Venice," I always enlivened matters by offering to lend money to those who personated the Christian, at, of course, usurious rates of interest, which the characters and credit of some of the performers warranted. We also talked scandal about Gratiano, Salarino, and others. Hal Lowther (an old actor and clever magazine writer) and I generally led this fooling, which must have looked natural from the front as we were talking of what was going on before us.

In the "crowd" were old actors who had known the chief when they were stars, and with reversal of fortune he now offered them a haven for their old age. There were the new generation of long-haired youths, who looked to the stage to give them an opportunity to be seen. Half of them should be bundled out and made to till the soil—for of such is the kingdom of egotism!

The humorous incidents that enliven an actor's life were almost absent from the Lyceum. An old "pro" once called in to see a friend; there was a rehearsal on—whether it was the obsequies of Miss Polonius or the cathedral scene from "Much Ado" tradition does not say. The organ was playing solemn music, acolytes were waving incense, priests were carrying crosses. As they came off the prompt side the old mummer saw his friend in the character of a bishop, and, seizing him by the hand, said in a voice full of emotion, "You are at prayers, dear boy; God forgive me for having called, but I didn't—believe me, dear boy—I didn't know your hours of divine service." This legend is the outcome of the character the Lyceum has for seriousness and good behaviour, and is accounted a good joke among actors. There

was no foul language or swearing among the men employed behind the curtain at the Lyceum, and if two men quarrelled they both had to leave, so "rows" were infrequent. One day at rehearsal a small vase was not there which Irving had ordered the property man to make. "We will wait for it," said our chief, quietly, and the whole rehearsal was stopped till that vase was made, and the members of the company, who were kept waiting, gave the man such a wigging that I don't think he will forget to carry out orders from Sir Henry again. Unless the head insist on properties being at rehearsal everything would be "left to the night."

Sometimes our chief was unjustly satirical at the expense of his company. I came to rehearsal dressed in mourning—for the actor has no immunity from observance of the sorrows death brings—and after standing for hours as a servant of Portia in silence while others talked, I was told "not to look like a mute at a funeral." I replied, "I feel more like a theatrical than an exequial mute," but my remark was ignored, as humour is not encouraged in the temple of the tragedian. Is it the quality of a well-bred servant to stand with a perpetual grin on his face like a Zulu boy when walking down Commissioner Street, Johannesburg, arrayed in a lady's dust cloak? I think not.

In the last act of the "Merchant of Venice," having, as Stephano, got to Belmont first before Gobbo, I always came on out of breath, and, while waiting, fixed my spur as though I had used it roughly, a bit of elaboration in a small part which I believed no one noticed except the Prince of Wales, who made some remarks to the Princess; at least, this is what my vanity makes me suppose. Then, to further show my agility, I took the steps leading to Portia's house

at a bound. They looked a lovely marble from the front; but, being only deal painted, I went right through them up to my knee, and, but for the long leather boots used by Miss Terry's—I mean Portia's—servants, I should have seriously hurt myself. Gobbo, who followed me off, being a cautious Scotchman, found a new way into Belmont through the prompt entrance.

The other incident was when the Doges (Life Guardsmen with long cloaks on) rose on the Duke's entrance. They pushed back the board upon which they had been seated, which fell without sound on the drapery behind. When the Duke bowed, as only Allen Beaumont can bow, and sat, the Doges resumed their seats—that is, they would have done so had there been any seats to resume. The first did so abruptly, and disappeared altogether, which caused the others to cautiously stoop and feel for their seats with their sitting anatomy; but, finding no rest, as it were, for the sole of the feet, they again became erect, and stood during the trial.

When Shylock came in he looked and smiled, as did Portia, to see them standing, and then we knew that the incident was a humorous one, and we all smiled in proportion to our salaries.

Pinero, who played Salarino in a way that made me wonder why he ever went in for acting, made a sensible remark, which showed the author. His line was—

“ My lord, here stays without
A messenger, with letters from the doctor,
New come from Padua.”

“ How do I know that the messenger has arrived with letters from the doctor if I am here? ” This query resulted in young Harwood (now a rising actor of ripe experience) being turned on as a page, who

came and whispered something into Pinero's ear, which probably Pinero wrote for him, and all was well, though, had he stood at the side, Harwood's entrance would not have been necessary.

One night Miss Terry, who has to give Barnes (Bassanio) a ring, which he, I believe, apostrophises as he shows it to the audience, gave him one with an indiarubber ball attached, by means of which you squirted scent in the face of anyone near. She had had all the amusement, that lasted as long as the scent held out, and then she put it lovingly on Bassanio's finger, whose "business" was spoilt by having to conceal the rubber ball from the audience, which, with the ring, at the first opportunity he flung heavenward, when it hit the painted sky, and, falling, was scrambled for by the stage carpenters below.

One night someone, at his dresser's suggestion, cooked some cockles for supper after the trial scene, when we all deserved something to sustain us. This fact, like most facts at a theatre, was generally known, so that when, during Miss Terry's speech, a terrific smell of boiling cockles was wafted across that Venetian court-room, every eye turned on their owner, who wished the odorous molluscs anywhere but at the Lyceum Theatre, while the travelled portion of the audience attributed the perfume to the chief's attention to realistic detail, and considered it a worthy attempt to reproduce the effect drainage has on the stagnant waters of the Adriatic when studied nasally.

One actor was told to scull his gondola as one would a dingey, with one oar over the stern rowlock. I explained that this was absurd—that the principle of a gondola would not permit it; nor was it necessary, as a gondola can be worked wherever the vessel will pass. We hadn't had "Venice in London" then, but

many of my travelled friends who went to the Lyceum laughed at this picture of Venetian oarsmanship.

At the Lyceum we were snubbed, or certainly not encouraged to think for ourselves or others. When through Sir Henry's kindness I was given the part of Dr Zimmer in "The Bells," I asked to be allowed to read the play that I might understand how the part was to be acted, as the rehearsals would be scant, owing to everybody knowing the parts. This was not permitted me by the prompter, who, having graduated to the theatre after being a soldier, of course was the best judge. I obtained a copy in French and read that. In that the doctor, putting his hand on the heart of Mathias, says, "Il est mort!" which I could have translated with the aid of a dictionary, but it would be useless to suggest that I should conclude the play in the manner the author intended, as Sir Henry, like my wife, will have the last word.

Some French writer affirms that a woman cannot be a good actress unless she has a spice of the devil in her, and everyone will agree with me that Miss Ellen Terry is a good actress. The scene in "Daisy's Escape" represented an upper room in an inn, which was suggested by telegraph wires and the tops of trees being painted on the cloth backing which was seen through the window. If anyone walked between the backing and the cloth upon which the window was, it upset the illusion Hawes Craven had so cleverly suggested, and to cross the stage at this point, instead of behind the back cloth, seemed to Miss Terry, as she came in from her carriage to dress for Portia, to be a bit of fun which she could not resist. As the inn-keeper, standing outside for my cue, I used to try and argue her out of it, when she would appear to agree to my protest, and having humbugged me

out of my watchfulness, would walk airily past the window, looking as the clown does in "Rosemary" when outside on stilts, doubtless to the momentary bewilderment of the audience. They probably supposed she was another traveller, who, avoiding the railway and its accidents, had come to the "Cross Keys" in a balloon.

When Bassanio would crumple up—as he would sometimes—the document Portia had given him in the casket scene and throw it down, Miss Terry, who was always the character she portrayed, would say, "I pray you, sir, do not treat my poor script so;" Bassanio, whose imagination did not lead him too readily into the realms of fancy, would answer, "What did you say, Miss Terry?" in earnest inquiry as to what was wrong. As a humble servant of Portia, I played the servant, and noted, as servants do in real life, what my employers were about.

All Shakespeare ever wrote about kings and courts he could study at the theatre—the crowd which wait on princes' favours, those human barnacles who cannot strike out a career for themselves, but must cling on to some great man, and shine with the reflected glory their toadyism, more often than their ability, brings them, are all there.

Calvert, if he wanted me to stand with my back to the audience, would expatiate on the beauty of my back, and say how effective such a position was from the front. That was the old style, but Irving would say that he wanted me to turn my back so that the audience would have their attention directed to his face.

I never saw Miss Ellen Terry out of temper, and her acts of kindness to the ladies, and more especially the chorus girls, are too numerous to mention. I went to church once, and in the sermon the clergyman said, speaking of actors and actresses, "But, my

brethren, we do not know what they do in the green room." Why did he not find out? Picture the Lyceum green room on a "Hamlet" night to be what you please, I will tell you what it was. Queen Gertrude (Miss Pauncefort), not on a throne, but on an ordinary chair, with her work in her lap and needle busy: Ophelia, taking it easy on the sofa with a book or magazine, for Miss Terry is a great reader: Pinero, as Salarino, standing at the mantelpiece thinking out plays that afterwards made him famous: Laertes, cheerful and courteous, chatting with Florence Terry, who was always merry: the Gravedigger looking over the evening paper, and Hamilton Clarke, the only man in modern clothes and evening dress, with one ear for the conversation and another for the orchestra, which he had left to the care of the first violin. Little that was wrong took place in that green room.

Miss Terry has no talent for punctuality. As her cue approached the whole staff began to get into a state of excitement, and the air became full of cries for Miss Terry. But she was always there in time for the public, and, if she was a moment late, the public forgave her directly she walked on the stage. Sometimes in the "Merchant" it looked as though Antonio would be unrepresented by counsel. How well these delays were commented upon by the crowd at the back.

"That there young barrister's late!"

"Them canals blocked again, I suppose, and the bloomin' gondola couldn't pass il ponte de sospiro, I s'pose," etc. etc.

In the casket scene the maid would sometimes only just get off the stage before the curtain went up, and even then Portia would not give up her powder puff, but would fling it off before the curtain rose to her waist. And what was the consequence? Instead

of everyone standing as if for their photographs, they looked as though the audience were suddenly introduced to a scene that was in progress, everybody seeming interested, and the fair Portia, her eyes sparkling with excitement, and her graceful concealment of recent toilet giving a natural animation to her appearance. Macready would shake a ladder before going on to the stage, so why should not Portia use a puff to make herself beautiful? If this be a puff, let her have the benefit of it—anything that will let her for years charm us as she does, and save me the box on the ears my remarks entitle her to administer.

During the "Merchant" Sir Henry would coach me up in my part in "The Bells," which we played on Saturday nights to give Miss Terry a rest. The anomaly of Shylock conversing with a servant of Portia did not matter, as the act drop was down.

If genius be the faculty of taking pains, Irving must be a genius, for if it were the last performance of a play, and he saw something that would improve it, he would adopt it. Months after we had been playing the "Merchant" he called me to him and said, "It would be better, Ganthon, if your spurs jingled a little more as you entered and crossed the stage." I accordingly had two metal discs put in each, the sound from which should have satisfied all the requirements of dramatic art. The company was very prone to say, "Look at the men the guv'nor has to work for him," forgetting that men must be selected like anything else, and what they do must be criticised by a superior intelligence, or a superlative presentment of stage plays is impossible.

When a poacher's hut was set for the first time, with all the windows beautifully painted, Irving rammed a piece of straw into one of them and

said, "That's better." The broken window gave character, as did the ornate furniture in the following "set" of the interior of a mansion, the appropriateness of which was as critically examined.

It is usual at the Lyceum to engage men from the Guards to act as supers, and in impersonating military characters they are admirable; but when a detachment came down to enact the venerable Doges who sit in judgment with the Duke, the effect was amusing.

The reader can picture the manner in which a number of Venetian greybeards would enter their court of justice, and will understand how little this picture was realised when, on a word from our chief indicating where they were to enter, the officer shouted, "Attention! Dress! Form twos! Forward! MARCH!" the men, as stiff and upright as drill could make them, marched with steady and resounding tramp into the hall of justice. When Irving explained what they were supposed to be, the young officer burst out laughing, and left his men to our stage manager, who taught them to stoop and walk as though old and infirm.

The surplus Doges enacted the Venetian guard, who stood round the court-room in stuffed breast-plates and padded tights. They often fainted, and were removed by the stage hands as they toppled over. I wondered at the time if the cause were the heat or a weariness of dramatic effect. A wider experience of human nature makes me attribute these swoonings to the knowledge of the fact that Mary Jane was waiting outside in Wellington Street, with whom the time might be more agreeably spent. This conclusion has, however, no basis of fact to support it.

At the end of the season a notice was put up

dismissing the whole company, which came upon me rather suddenly, as I had understood that I could remain as long as I liked ; but here again there was nothing in writing, so I was foolish to have relied upon it. Sir Henry, I know now, did me an act of kindness in forcing me to strike out for myself. He had said that the Lyceum was no place for a comedian, that I was wasting time there, and that I should give an entertainment or play comedy parts.

It was a mournful discovery to find that the agents would hardly listen to my applications ; in fact, with all my experience, I appeared worse off than when I knew nothing. I was advised to frequent the Gaiety bar, which I did for one day, drank some spirits, which I detested, and walked back to my lodgings wondering why such a fascinating art had such distasteful surroundings. Tired of wasting time trying to obtain an engagement, I determined to write an entertainment, and thus "Evenings from Home," the general title for the numerous programmes of little plays which my sister and I gave throughout England for over eight years, was inaugurated.

One of the agents upon whom I called (a Mr Haywell) had written a play in blank verse on some historical subject, which, as he could not get it produced, he determined to read at the Steinway Hall. The time of the reading was three o'clock. I arrived at a quarter past, hot and out of breath, and inquired excitedly if there was still room ? The man at the door thought there was, and his theory was verified, for there were only two besides myself when I entered—a man in the gallery, who could not make up his mind where to sit, and a black man in the stalls, who grinned at me as though the affair were a good joke. Mr Haywell appeared and recited to us some five acts of blank verse, which effectually took the

grin out of the Indian, and sent the man in the gallery to sleep. Haywell had had promises of a good audience, and his play deserved a better fate. I think the matter preyed on him, for I heard of his death shortly afterwards.



Eventings from Home.

INSTEAD of following Maccabe, Woodin, and others, and giving a series of impersonations having no reference to each other, I introduced acting and plot in dialogue form, arguing that the development of a plot would interest ; that acting different characters was more amusing than merely impersonating them ; that dialogue was more interesting than monologue ; and that a lady whose singing would fill up the time when I was changing from one character to another would be a capital attraction. The first piece I wrote was "On Board the *Reverie*," the plot of which suggested itself to me when yachting with a friend, after whose schooner I named our first play or sketch, which, with "The Lady Help," formed our No. 1 evening.

In those days I knew nothing about sleight-of-hand, ventriloquism, and the numerous "Ganthonicals" that I have invented since, and which now comprise my present single-handed two hours' entertainment. I could recite, but an evening of recitation, unless in the hands of my dear friend Samuel Brandram, at that time was of no use as an attraction with the general public; so an entertainment of character acting in plays, broken up by violin, flute, banjo, and singing, was decided upon.

I wrote the sketches myself, because I was not able to pay anyone else to write them. When I went to

the agents to engage a lady to play with me I found that it was even more difficult to secure an actress than it was to obtain an engagement. At last Mr Haywell, to whom I have alluded, found a young lady, who called upon me, and, to my alarm, produced a number of photographs of herself in tights and airy costumes. If my wife sees these, I thought, there will be an end to my scheme altogether.

When asked if she played the piano, she said, "Yes, in the way of a vampire." I knew something about music and had a fair acquaintance with the English language, but I could not understand what she meant. Do you, reader? If you do, forgive me for saying that she meant that she "vamped"—*id est*, accompanied a song by following it with the simple chords of the key in which the song was written. The method hardly accorded with my desire to introduce good music into my programmes. Her voice was common, and her education had not been what would be termed a liberal one—not so liberal, at all events, as the terms she demanded. I did not know how to explain with sufficient delicacy that she would not do, when she said, on hearing that there were only two in the play, "Oh, I ain't going round the country with you in a sketch; I should lose my character." This new and unexpected view of the matter saved me any further trouble, and, taking up her photographs, she wished me "good-day" and left.

This element of propriety added to my difficulties, which, if existing when the lady lacked education and raiment, would be enhanced when a more suitable actress presented herself. My wife from her sick bed suggested that I should ask my youngest sister Ada to play the part, adding, "She is always acting." This was a good idea; a brother and sister was a good combination for a family

entertainment, if my sister, who was still in short frocks, was not too young. The failure of the Ag a Bank and other Indian investments made her, I knew, though young, wish to do something for herself, and so I wrote to her proposing that I should teach her, and write parts to suit her, and have her join me in my venture. She replied that she thought that she could act as well as plenty of girls she had seen, and that she would not be "so jolly affected and conceited, which," she added, "I don't think people like." I sent her two pounds to get her from the North, where she was staying with a married sister, who made her come up first class because some of her (the married sister's) friends might be at the station. This was done at my expense, as she paid the fare out of the money I had sent, and which I could ill spare. Needless to say that my sister proved an apt pupil, and years before the London papers alluded to her confidence as being remarkable for a *débutante*, I had patiently taught her the business of the stage point by point. When we made known our intention the family insisted on our assuming an *alias*, which, as I have said, I have always declined to do. If my talents, fortunately or unfortunately, lie in a certain direction, I need not disgrace my name because I exercise those talents. The upshot was that I put my wife's name, "Nellie," in the bills and programmes, and by that name my sister Ada has been known to the public ever since.

Determined to try and do everything well, as I had seen it done at the Lyceum, I had a model of a yacht cabin made, with steps that led down into it—bunks, port-holes, or dead lights—which was all right for effect, but not for moving about. A cart was always necessary for the luggage, which got terribly knocked about, and did not fit every hall we played at; and

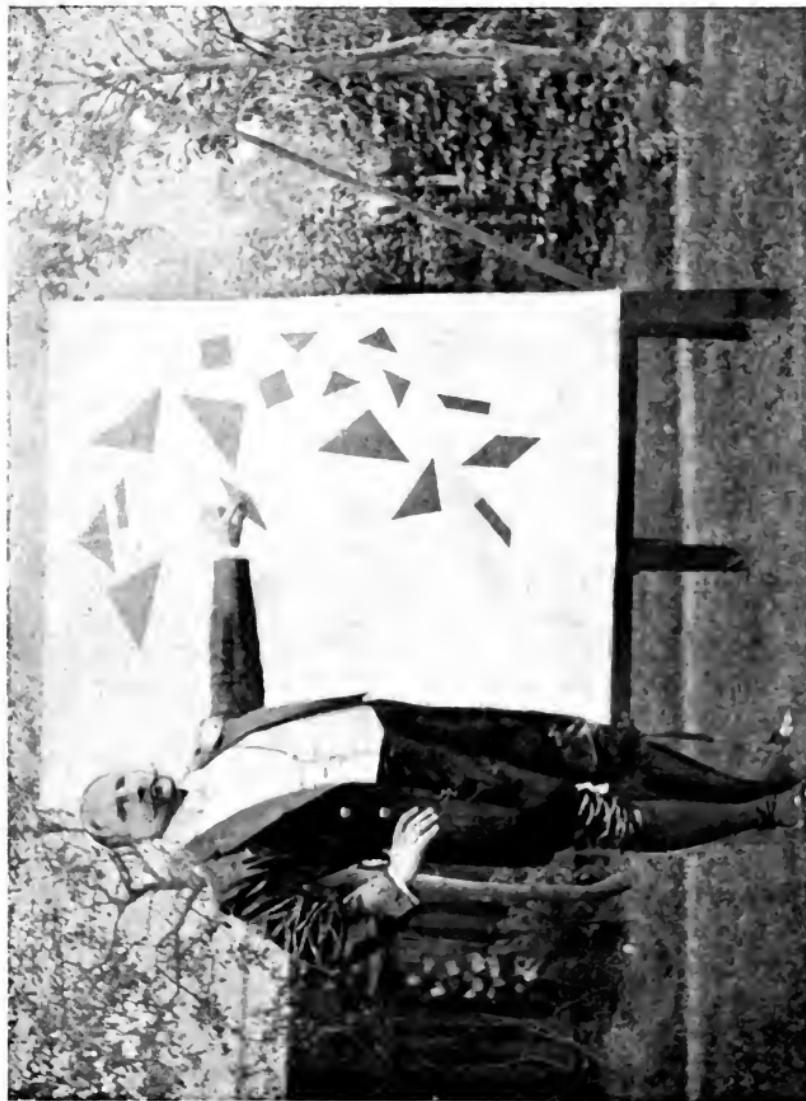
further, it took all day to put up, and when it was up the audience, I found, just glanced at it, forgetting it directly we came upon the stage.

I advertised for an acting manager in the *Era*, and men came who had scarcely shoes to their feet. I was quite ashamed of my visitors. Ultimately I secured a man who, as he termed it, "Knew the road," for he and his wife had given an entertainment, and I did not foresee at the time that they intended at my expense to arrange another tour for themselves while going round with me.

Through the kindness of Dr Lane, of Harley Street, whom I had known for some years, my wife, who was very ill, obtained leave to walk in the grounds of Bethlehem Hospital—"Bedlam"—when every passer-by would look at her through the railings with curiosity and pity, and seem very disconcerted and surprised when the gatekeeper bowed her out into the street. In return for this privilege I offered to give the first performance of "On Board the *Reverie*" for the edification of the patients, thinking that if it pleased the lunatics inside "Bedlam" it could not fail afterwards with the general public. Having arranged the evening, I wrote to my friend Truscott, who was then Lord Mayor, to come and see it. He notified his intention direct to the heads of the hospital, and put them in a flurry as to whether he would come in state or as an ordinary mortal. As it happened, he came, with Lady Truscott, as an ordinary mortal, ready to be amused, and at the end of the performance he expressed himself enthusiastically about our future chances.

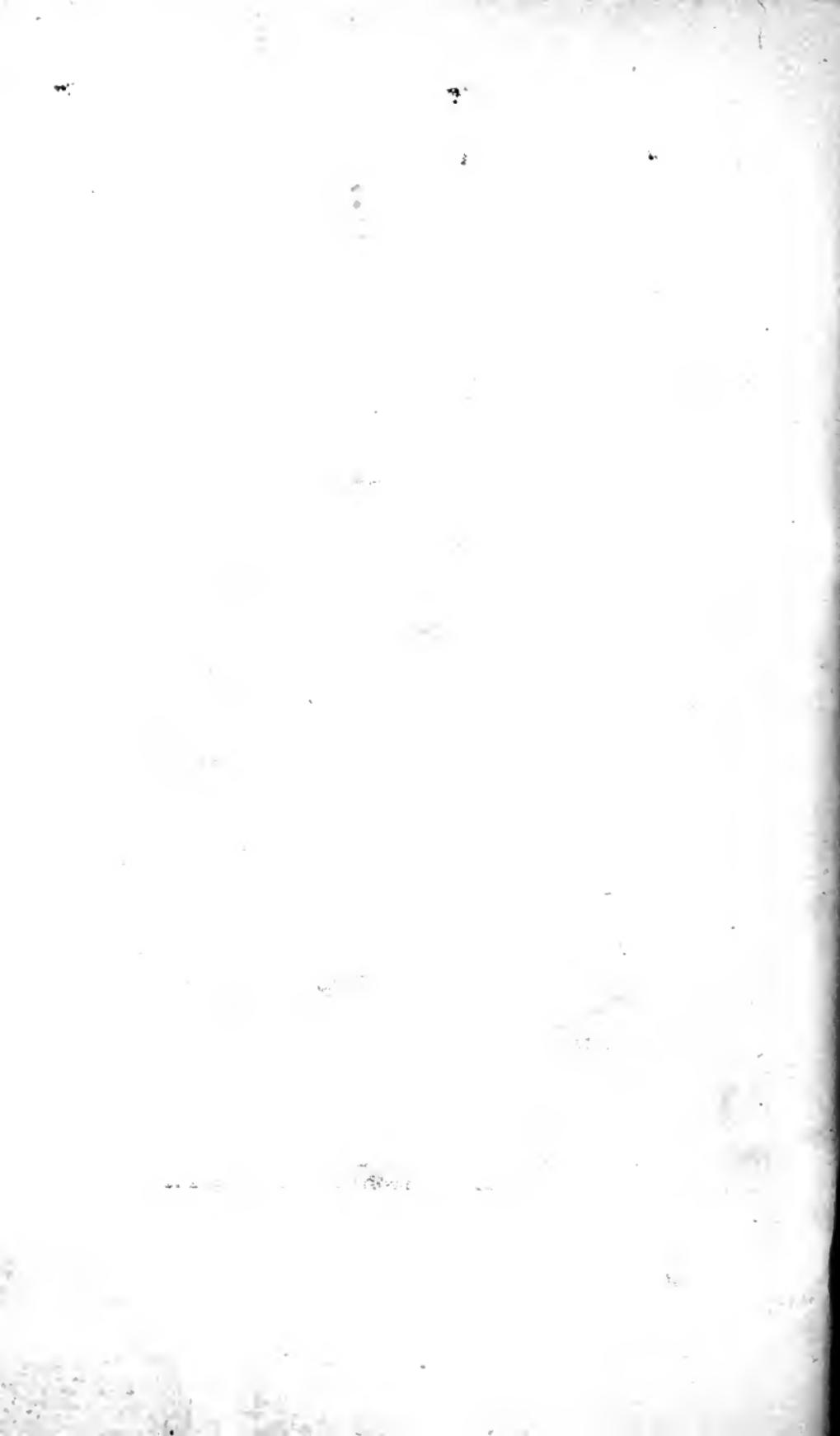
My father, who has acted with Woodin, etc., in the old days in charitable performances at the Olympic Theatre which drew full houses, was quite taken aback at my sister's *début*. He said the easy, collected way

AMATEUR PORTRAITURE.



Taken by R. W. Reynolds (the Publisher of the Author's Songs).

How the Posters for "Ganthy's Grotesques" were made.



in which she entered and delivered her lines, as she looked over some music on the piano, was as natural as anything could be—all of which I was glad to hear.

My manager had booked a short tour commencing at St Albans, upon which we started soon after the initial performance. The tour over, he deserted me.

I was advised by friends to give the next performance nearer home, so I arranged for an evening at the Masonic Hall, Camberwell. With the assistance of a sailor sent by my friend Mr Harry Taylor from his yacht *Reverie*, I spent the whole day putting up the heavy scene, working till I gave the performance in the evening. Had I not been very strong physically I could not have gone through what I did. As I had improved the entertainment, the concert was artistically and financially successful.

The necessity of a lighter "fit up" became obvious, and I saw that the absence of the heavy cartage bills and excess luggage would have left a small profit, and, besides, not have worn me out at work I should of course have been spared.

Instead of a drawer curtain and yacht scene, I had a half circle of light brass rods and light curtains, with a port-hole that fitted on to ordinary chairs which were covered with cushions, and this suggestion of a yacht cabin proved to be all that was necessary. With our new arrangement we could get the whole paraphernalia on to a four-wheel cab, and start direct and all together from the stations to the halls. This abandonment of heavy luggage was the turning point towards success. With less heavy labour I could give a better performance, and the weight of the show rested on me more at first than it did afterwards, as my sister learnt her art by constantly playing, and began to introduce on her own account a lot of funny

and consistent business. About this time a gentleman who had lost money in other ways conceived the idea of reimbursing himself with our entertainment, and made a proposition. We were to have twelve pounds a week, and he would engage us for three months. This would have been advantageous indeed had he understood the business of an *entrepreneur*, but he did not.

Our tour with the gentleman we will call the "speculator" was to Tunbridge Wells, Hastings, Folkestone, Dover, Herne Bay, etc.; Calais, in France, and another place near there, the name of which I have forgotten, where we played at a hall called L'Elysée.

I had thought that if an entertainment succeeded in pleasing it would be a good living, but experience showed that an entertainment must not only *be* good, *but the public must know that it is good*. We found on our first tours that, though those who came liked it, not enough knew in time to ensure a profit. But we are advertised for Tunbridge Wells, so let us get there.

A fearfully hot day in August was the kind of weather on which our speculator made his first start. We began with a matinée. The people at the hotel at which we performed and stayed had taken tickets, so we opened, but not a soul came. Learning that the hotel folk were not coming till the evening, we closed the hall, and, removing our make-up, went out into the cool in a somewhat thoughtful mood; but, as our speculator was merry, and inclined to make light of it, we gave up grieving over what did not affect our salaries.

french Experiences.

WHEN we played at Hastings at the music hall, which was named before music halls came into fashion and was, as its name implied, a hall for music, the manager strongly advised us to cross the channel. "At Calais," he said, "all the English employed at the lace factories would rush to see anything English. We should be the first to go there." We were, and I devoutly hope, for the sake of others, that we were the last. So enthusiastic did our speculator become, that he asked me, as I spoke French, if I would spend the few dates we had open in going over to Boulogne and Calais and see about engaging dates there. I went to Boulogne, and the first person I met was Dr Lane, who had a chateau on the coast. With him we interviewed the managers of the different places of entertainment. The terms they offered made me wonder why the French have the impertinence to call us a nation of shopkeepers, for a stingier or meaner people are surely difficult to find. Do business with them and you will no longer wonder why French artistes fill our music halls. There was nothing to do at Boulogne ; Le Grand Vance (the Great Vance) had been there, and British talent was at a discount. My English friends said that they had never been made to feel so ashamed of their country as during this artiste's term of engagement. The French shrugged their shoulders and were scathingly satirical at the class of entertainment that the English love. As there was nothing to be done at Boulogne, I went on to Calais, and, inquiring of a young Frenchman in carpet slippers for the theatre, he not only told me where it was, but accompanied me there. During our stroll he learnt the object of my visit, which naturally I wished

to make as public as possible. He handed me his card, and introduced himself as the Baron Carryon la Tour and offered me his services. Carry on *la tour* was what I wanted to do, so we repaired to the manager of the theatre, who kept a wineshop, where we ordered some refreshment, and, talking the matter over, the Baron said that he would undertake the duties of local agent on commission. As I had nothing to lose by this I agreed to it, whereupon we summoned the manager and, over the wine and some cigarettes, we went deeply, and with a wonderful amount of ceremony, into the matter, and fixed a date. The manager then complimented the Baron on his capacity for business, and the Baron complimented the manager on his, and we separated. I have lost all record of the transaction now, but I remember that I had to pay a poor rate, for *les pompiers*—the men with the fire-engine—and had to put a stamp on all bills put on walls or in windows—a plan we might adopt in England, with a view to the moderation of the hoardings now so common. I left the Baron to look after the advertising and see to the bills being put up, and returned to continue our tour along the south coast, at which we had varying success—a few good houses, and for some reason—whether we had the wrong hall, the wrong night, or our entertainment was not to their fancy—we had poor houses, which took away the profits the good houses brought. It was after a run of ill-luck that we crossed to France, my wife, sister, self, and our man, known as the “Gorilla.” On arriving at Calais the Baron met us full of fury with our speculator, who, it appears, had left him to work without funds. He showed us to what was called a hotel, where he had taken rooms for us—and very expensive rooms they were—and what was worse, it

was a place we should not have gone to, as it was chiefly a wine-drinking place for sailors. It was kept by a man who had been a gentleman and had run through his money and settled down in Calais, purchasing this place with the remnant of his capital, and remaining where the English creditors ceased from troubling. The speculator, now that we were in France, left us to get on as well as we could without funds also, as he had done our noble agent in advance. During the time we were there the Baron would go out and fight the men who tried to cover up our posters, and there were some miniature riots on this subject with him and his friends and those of the rival billposter. The hotel alarmed my womenfolk, and the variety entertainment that went on downstairs, kept up by a male and female vocalist and a harpist, did not lull them to sleep, though the music was kept up till quite late. I would have given the whole thing up, but we received no remittances from the speculator, and had to make the best of it.

The performance at the Calais Theatre was fairly successful, but the Elysée, a few miles out, was a mere waste of time and money. The hotel fleeced us in such a barefaced way that all our takings went and yet were not enough to satisfy his charges. I went with the Baron to the Monte de Pieté and pawned my watch and chain. I gave him the money to settle with the hotel, as he explained that he was connected with it, and he gave me a receipt on their paper.

I left that day (Saturday), telling my man to follow with the luggage so as to arrive in time for the evening performance at Dover on the Monday. If we had waited for the theatrical stuff we should have missed the boat, and, as my wife and sister implored me to get them out of Calais as soon as

possible, I crossed with them, leaving the "Gorilla" to follow on Monday. That evening we had tea in a comfortable lodging in Dover, and what a sense of relief and security it was to be once again in England!

On Monday, when I went to meet the boat, no "Gorilla" and no luggage arrived. At once I had out bills saying that my sister, on account of the passage, would not be able to appear until Tuesday, and then, finding I had just enough for the trip across and a two franc piece over, I took a ticket and caught the night boat and crossed to see what had happened, reached Calais and the hotel just as the sailors were turning out from the *café chantant*, and found the proprietor drunk.

The first thing I saw on entering was the luggage. The man had got it from the theatre as security for our hotel bill, which the Baron had not settled. He had instead left for Paris with the money. I showed the proprietor my receipt, and he only laughed. I argued with him, and he got more and more drunk as night went on. One moment he would let me have the things; the next he would not. At last he said that if he could keep my portmanteau and have my mackintosh coat, I could take the things if I'd promise to remit him the amount of the bill, which, of course, I said I would do. He took the coat and put the portmanteau under his chair, and then decided that he would *not* let the things go.

At daybreak the wretch fell asleep, and I still waited, hungry and sick of the smell of the place. An hour or so passed, and the man came to take down the shutters and sweep out the place. Rousing his master he led him to bed, to which he went without noticing me. Through the now opened door I saw a man in a blouse wheeling a long barrow. I

asked him if he could take my luggage down to the steamer? "Willingly," he replied in French. He was now going down to it. In a moment we had lifted the baskets on to his truck, and were on our way to the docks or pier. When we got there I said, "Combien?" He said, "Deux francs," and I gave him the only piece of money I had left. "Shall we put your things aboard?" a sailor asked, in a language that was refreshing to hear. "Yes," I answered, carelessly; "yes, put them on board." Then I walked up and down the quay wondering what I should do. I was determined to give a performance that night, and equally determined to get the luggage over, though I had not a penny piece with which to bless myself. If I told the captain he might put my luggage ashore and wait till I had the money. If I went on board I might be asked for my fare, which might lead both to myself and my luggage being rejected, so I walked up and down the quay until the steamer was starting, and the captain shouted, "Now, sir, if you intend going, get aboard." I did intend going, so I stepped aboard, the gangway was immediately pulled away, and in a few minutes I was watching with relief the increasing length of water between the steamer and the Calais pier. When the officer began collecting the fares I placed myself where the dreaded interview would be postponed as long as possible, and also got into a corner by myself, so that our conversation should be private. At last he came, and, with a cheerful flip of his ticket-book, he said, "Fares, please," to which I truthfully replied, "I have no money."

"That's a nice state of affairs."

"I don't think so."

He smiled and walked off humming a tune. When he had finished his accounts he came back, and lean-

ing against the partition near me, asked me what was the matter? I told him my story, to which he listened and then left me.

When he returned he said, "You are the Mr Ganthonio who is giving an entertainment at the Appolonian Hall to-night? Three of you came over on Saturday?" I said "Yes" to both questions.

"The young lady did not appear sick when crossing."

"Those packages would have made her all right," I replied, indicating my luggage.

"Do you think you could spare me six front seats for to-night?"

This was easily done, and I wrote him out a card at once, whereupon he said he would see me through. How I blessed that sailor, and if he is ever in a straight, and will let me know, I will help him.

Arrived at Dover, I saw my luggage swung ashore; but I could not see my friend, and began to think that I had been sold again. An English sailor, however, is more to be trusted than a French count, and I had faith.

"I forgot to give you your ticket," a voice said behind me, when, tearing one out of his book, he passed me up the gangway, and I stepped on shore about three o'clock on Tuesday afternoon.

"Take up yer luggage, sir?" shouted the porters.

I selected the most good-natured man I could see, and gave him the job, following him on foot to the hall. We soon had the baskets on the stage.

"Perhaps you would like to come in to-night with your wife?"

"Very much, if you please, sir."

"All right, here's my card; admit two. When I see you after the show I will tell you about the luggage to-morrow, and settle up for the lot."

When he had gone I breathed again, and could not help smiling at getting myself and a lot of luggage over from France into the hall at Dover without spending a penny.

I was putting up the "fit up" when my wife and sister arrived and lent a hand. The "Gorilla," not expecting that I would come over so soon, had escorted the wife of the Calais hotel proprietor to a picnic, from which I left him to get back on the same terms as I had done.

Before the doors were opened crowds had assembled, those who could not get in on Monday swelling the patrons on the Tuesday. In addition, the closing on Monday and the sister's illness, though apocryphal, created talk and sympathy. At all events, we had a bumper house, and the coin clinked at the box office for half an hour, with gratifying results to the treasury. Our first piece was "The Lady Help," in which I open in the character of an old Irish lodging-house keeper. In the middle of the old woman's first speech in walked my friend the officer, with five pretty girls. He was shown to the best seats in the house. I caught his eye once and gave him a wink, and since that time have never seen or heard of him.

With funds in hand I was liberal to the man who had brought the luggage. The strain and excitement over, I felt the effects of what I had gone through. It was half-past ten, and I had had nothing to eat since dinner the previous day. Crossing the Channel twice did not lessen my discomfort, added to which I had had no sleep, but a very miserable and anxious time. Next day I sent the money I owed to France, settled up with the billposters—a swindling set if ever there was one—paid for the advertisements, piano, etc., which was not for me to do, and then we

started for Herne Bay, where we had to turn the people away. When we had finished at Herne Bay on the first night, I found, on going to the box office, that the speculator had suddenly turned up and collared the takings. We had another big house on the second night, when the speculator, out of the money that came in, paid up what he owed for the French trip, but decided that the Baron's behaviour cancelled his obligation to pay him; so he put that amount in his own pocket, together with the balance, after paying us.

As the speculator left us when we wanted assistance, and only came to take his share of the receipts when business was good, we decided in future to do without one. Speculative touring is something like gambling at Monte Carlo—the odds are against you, and you must ultimately lose. The receipts when touring are uncertain, whereas the expenses are not. A wet night, or a night that is too fine; local opposition shows; sickness, a murder, a political meeting, where they can hear indifferent oratory free of charge, are all contingencies that may spoil your chance of a house; but the billposter will come if no one else does, with a bill for displaying printing that is under the cushion of his parlour sofa; the hall and the piano must be paid for, and money takers, ticket takers, etc., must be remunerated.

Occasionally people will flock to see a man whom a theatre or music hall has boomed, and while the fashion lasts, and the public flock, money can be made; but these are exceptional cases, and require not only a clever artiste, but that that artiste must have a number of favourable conditions to assist him, for, as a general rule, touring when you take halls means loss of money and very hard work. Not to be misunderstood in trying to warn those who, as

many do after a success in their own town, go on tour, I might add that I am not referring to the touring of theatrical companies, where the circumstances are different, as the local theatre takes half the risk—finding the theatre, billposting, etc. I am alluding to speculating with an entertainment where halls are engaged. The disastrous results even of the Moore and Burgess Minstrels' provincial tour, under its present management, goes to prove the correctness of what I am saying.

Mr and Mrs Arthur Law gave a charming entertainment, which some years earlier would have made their fortunes, but their encouragement, like that which we had, did not warrant them in continuing to speculate.

What happened to us, when experiencing anxiety and loss from touring, was that a number of secretaries of institutes and societies saw our "Evenings from Home" while holiday-making at the seaside, and engaged it for their winter season at fees varying from five to fifteen guineas. In these engagements we had to do nothing but provide the entertainment, be ready to commence at the time arranged, and receive a cheque at the conclusion. Here was a phase of the entertaining business of which I was previously ignorant; and another matter which I did not foresee was that the class of entertainment which I had arranged was a change from the conjuring, lectures, etc., of which the institutes had had a surfeit. The little farces, introducing instrumental music, and the charming singing and acting of my sister Nellie, whose love of fun makes her keep the fact of her being a delightful ballad singer a profound secret, made the matter we submitted very taking—if I may repeat what was said of us.

My friends, George Grossmith and Albert Chevalier,

both had circumstances operating in their favour which they did not control and could not have foreseen. An author wanting a tenor who had no voice is a form of humour peculiar to a man of Mr Gilbert's original genius; the music hall craze, and the sudden fascination and popularity of coster songs sung for years before, and going on now, gave Chevalier a popularity of which he never dreamed. So in a minor way did this opening save us from having all our labour lost. By cultivating the institutes we could book up in summer months engagements for the winter upon which we could rely, and from September to Lent we made from ten to twenty pounds a week for about eight years. It was mere chance this feature of fixed fees, but it saved the situation. At the present time so many touring companies go to every village that the days of the institutes have passed, and had we began now to offer the same entertainment, we could not make a fifty pound note at it. The effect of the companies going round was to make acting, which was the feature of our work, common; and the public would count the cast in the company, and then, looking at our programme, would say, "Only two!" and feel that they would not get their money's worth. They are beginning to learn now that numbers do not constitute talent.

A well-known actor told me that he was amused at an old colonel at Terry's, who was loud in his expostulations when my sister came on to give her monologue. He wanted a play at a theatre—in which I think he was right—but as her entertainment proceeded he became interested in it, then began to laugh, and finally gave way to the successful efforts of one performer who amused the audience for nearly an hour. When the play "Jedbury

"Junr." came on he wouldn't have it at any price. The Indian scene, where everyone complains of the heat, and in which there are no punkahs, and no black servants (an arrangement only found at the Government House), disgusted him and he left. I recall this as a case of numbers *versus* talent.

In visiting institutes round the country I heard many things that were interesting about entertainers who are gone ; for the folk in the country have good memories for what talent visits them, and very good judges they are too. How they worship the memory of the first George Grossmith ! At Alton they told me at the institute of the early appearance there of Savoy Theatre George, and his father's anxiety about his future. "There is that boy of mine gone married and getting a family, and the public don't take to him. I don't know what will become of him." He was with his father then being introduced to the institute world, and the institute world preferred the old favourite, his father. Entertaining, like everything else, has to be learnt and developed by practice, and our Savoy George was then beginning. His subsequent success shows what can be done by perseverance and seizing opportunities. I expect the more robust style of the father made the son's early successes more difficult with that particular audience, for, like Aristophanes, to be appreciated, he wanted a cultured and refined audience. I always thoroughly enjoyed my friend's work. It appealed to me. I possibly possess, without knowing it, the quality of refinement essential to his success.

A curious instance of what I mean was demonstrated in Weedon Grossmith's performance in "The Romance of a Shop Walker," when as the Shop Walker he sings a song of trashy senti-

ment called, I think, "After the Ball." A nobleman's daughter (charmingly played by his wife, Miss May Palfrey) accompanies him upon the piano. He says, "Ah, that's really good—the words you know—real poetry," or something to that effect, which provoked a roar of laughter at the Vaudeville, but at Ealing, when I heard it there, the audience took his remarks seriously, and agreed with him that "After the Ball" was a fine song, and one that embodied a fine sentiment. Satire is a dangerous form of amusement unless you have a special audience. The very elements of George Grossmith's first non-success were the factors of his subsequent triumphs. I heard, when on tour, of Woodin—who nursed me on his knee when I was a boy—and of his days. He would not accept institute engagements, because he could do better by putting up his bills and giving a show on his own account. It will be seen how fashion changes. When entertainers were scarce, they could do better by putting up their bills and opening their doors to the public. As they became more plentiful, the entertainer did better with an engagement. Then entertainments became so common that institutes failed and could not engage them. There are still institutes which do engage them, and there are subscription concerts which supply the best entertainment to the best audiences, but the institutes have seen their best days. With his carpet-bag and sketch-book, Woodin went to all the small towns he thought likely to be of any use. A doctor, who always welcomed anything in the way of a respectable entertainment, told me that Woodin drove in a dog-cart to his village once, but before he could speak to him he had made up his mind not to try it, and had left. At another, they told me that he was a great man for advertising, and would leave a quantity of

pictures, with orders that directly one got torn or soiled another one was to be put up. When in London, the large carpet-bag and sketch-book which he carried about the streets, reaching as it did half-way up the houses, so frightened the horses that the police had to stop its exhibition.

On his retirement he wrote to his father, who had always opposed the entertainment, that he had given up the show business, and, as he was coming to see him, he sent on his carpet-bag. To the old gentleman's amazement, when he pulled up his blind the next morning he saw this enormous counterfeit bag of lath and plaster reposing on his front lawn.

By having everything made to go in a small space, and weigh very little, and a "fit-up" that was portable and easily fixed, we were able to visit a number of small places with profit, which previously would have been impossible. When paid a fee we had not the expense of advertising, and had to spend no time in "working up a house." The local people will do that when they have to get the money back they pay you; but woe betide you if you go to a place and trust to their promises, and take the risk yourself! If they will not guarantee a sum it is because there is a risk about getting it back; and as we didn't care to run that risk, we did not go without a guarantee, and a few of our experiences will show the sagacity of this course.

At a village—I think Woburn Sands—we were to give an entertainment at the schoolroom attached to the vicarage, and be the guest of the vicar. Shortly after we arrived a tremendous snowstorm came on and literally buried the schoolroom and the country round. After dinner we went to the room and gave the entertainment to the vicar, his friends, and a shepherd who had beaten his way through the snow. The old man said, proudly, "Oi be on the committee,

and be bound to come." Many committee-men that I know would have been disinclined to face that snow, even though duty called them.

Once we went to Thornbury, where we found that we had to perform in the tennis court of Thornbury Castle, the seat of Norfolk Howard; and we further discovered that it was audit day. Every hotel in Thornbury was crammed with farmers who had come in to pay their rents, and it was impossible to procure food from the town, which was some way off. We drove to the Castle, and were trying over some music when a gentleman came in and began chatting with us, finishing up by telling us that we were invited to dine at the Castle. We accepted, though as a rule we preferred not to go out before work, as entertaining conversation is expected of us, which is really more tiring than repeating what we have committed to memory. It was a lovely place, and among the guests at dinner were a number of titled people, whose names I forget, though I remember them and most of our conversation. My sister kept them laughing all through dinner, and they encouraged us to say good things by their sympathy and courtesy. We are not great ones for wine and spirits, so when asked what wine we would take, my sister said, seeing water on the table, "I should prefer water," and I echoed her. The Howards are enthusiastic temperance advocates, and our unconscious acquiescence with their views I believe was both a surprise and a gratification to them. I remember seeing Norfolk Howard at one of the small Gloucester railway stations, and remarked to my sister what a handsome and distinguished man he looked—a worthy example of the advantages of abstinence. Without wishing to pose as a teetotaler, I often have to confess that total abstinence is better than the degradation drink too.

frequently brings, and the human misery necessary to keep so many lights flaring at the publicans' windows. Why is temperance mixed up with Christianity? Christ turned the water into wine—not wine into water.

After dinner the vicar, who was there, told us that he intended looking after us till we left. He drove us away in his carriage to an inn used by hunting men in the season, which we found wonderfully comfortable. Thus all our difficulties about food and lodging were removed, and, instead of being fleeced at the overcrowded town, we dined with people of title and had capital quarters, for which the vicar would not allow us to pay. I found then, as I have often done since, that people whose position is assured have the most gracious manners, and when you find people try to enforce their importance upon your attention, you are dealing with those to whom a position in society is still of the character of a surprise.

A lady at Putney wrote me a letter in the third person, putting at the bottom —, Esq., M.P., address Mrs —, and alluded to the high-class quality of her guests, which, instead of impressing me, only told me that her position was newly acquired, as was her husband's right to the letters "M.P." This gentleman, I heard when dining at St Stephen's Club, is the only member who puts M.P. on his visiting card! I remember, when we kept a carriage, our coachman, speaking of some people who were never without theirs at the door, said, "They ain't had it long, that's 'ow it is." The same is true of position and everything else; but why haven't the new rich who have brains the sense to act otherwise?

My sister and I once went to give an entertainment at Beaumont College. When we arrived at Windsor, a gentleman met us at the station.

"I want to explain," he said, "Beaumont College is a Jesuit college, and, of course, no ladies are admitted."

"Why did you engage us?" I naturally asked.

"Because we wanted *you* to give us an entertainment."

"Then I had better go home," my sister remarked with a slight pout.

"You should have written and told me," I remarked.

"Then you would not have come, and we should not have had you."

"But I am not prepared to give a two hours' entertainment, and certainly not at a moment's notice," was my rejoinder, but in the end I got my dress suit out of the basket, rammed it under the seat of his dog-cart as, of course, I had no portmanteau, and then saw the sister into the train, she and the luggage returning to Richmond.

The entertainment we intended giving was "The Lady Help," and "On Board the *Reverie*," and it was only owing to our engagement to give a fuller show at the St James' Hall the following evening that I happened to have, for the first time in two years, a dress suit with me; but it was a misfortune not to be able to undertake our regular programme, as we intended this performance to be a rehearsal for the London performance; so it is that things happen to spoil an important event, as our London appearance was to us.

The Jesuits were the most charming hosts I ever had; they could not do enough for me. I was naturally anxious to arrange what I was going to do to get through the evening. They took me to the theatre, when it struck me as very odd to see a priest in his cap and long gown pulling away at the curtain ropes and setting the wings, and doing what was

usually done by a stage carpenter in his shirt sleeves. With a sheet of paper and a pencil I made out a programme. When I walked on the stage with my hastily-prepared programme, and saw before me a collection of red-gowned cardinals with keen, critical, intellectual faces, I felt that the whole business was hardly fair, as no remark was made about the change of programme, and I was judged as though I was giving my best work. The evening was one of great anxiety, and I was glad when it was over. Neither my sister nor I had perfected our monologue entertainment in those days. The monks expressed themselves delighted, as was the groom who after supper drove me to the station. The latter had under his knee a little fair-haired girl, whose presence he apologised for by explaining that she *would* go to the entertainment, and he was now smuggling her home. So there was a lady there after all! When my sister got to Richmond she did not trouble about the luggage, which the men knew so well that they always took it to my house as a matter of course. This time, however, it was back so soon, that the porter seeing it said, "Why wasn't this lot sent to Windsor? Mr Ganthony wants it there for to-night," whereupon it was put on the train and sent down to Windsor again. When I got out of the dog-cart and walked into Windsor Station, with my dress clothes in a sheet of paper, the first thing I saw was the luggage I had seen off in the train with my sister a few hours previously. "It's an ill wind that blows no good," and, delighted to get rid of my bundle, I opened the basket and put it in, had it labelled again for Richmond, and accompanied it home.

When we arrived at Walton-on-Thames on one occasion we found the hall on an island, and we had to drive several miles through water on account of

the floods. Here was another advantage of working for a fee ! What audience we had came in punts and boats, which were tied outside until there was quite a fleet. Our audience was what they call small but select, and wonderfully enthusiastic, as is always the case when people have to take trouble to see a performance because they want amusement; they enjoy it as a hungry man enjoys a meal. The events that follow are my warrant for alluding to this evening. The fly proprietor—and, in a measure, I do not blame him for not thinking that a journey through water with our luggage on the top would improve his vehicle—sent us one of his early purchases. In the dark we did not notice it much. When we had gone about a mile through water, rolling about as we scrunched through the wet and yielding gravel of the road, off came the near front wheel, and the coach went over on its side, throwing the coachman over a low hedge into a field, together with the basket containing our recently-admired wardrobe. At that moment the horses began to plunge and kick.

"Good heavens !" I exclaimed, "the chap's off the box." We could see this through the front glass. It flashed across me that we were near the Thames, where the straight road leads right into the river, and the road over the river by the bridge turned to the right, an arrangement showing great wisdom. The horses in their plunging were righting the carriage and beginning to bolt. I made a grab at the window strap, when it came off in my hands, as the animals began to drag the carriage forward. The other window strap was as rotten as the first, and we couldn't get the door open. It all happened in a few seconds. The horses were making straight for the river. I felt sure that we should be drowned like rats in a cage, when the horses were suddenly brought

to a standstill, and a policeman, who was paddling about in rubber boots, flashed his light, and we knew it was all right. Policemen *are* sometimes to be found when they are wanted, and, though I did not expect to find a policeman in that country lane up to his knees in water, he possibly, I have thought since, stationed himself where he knew there was most danger to vehicles. We had not too much time to catch our train home, so, despite the moisture, we both got out and cooled our feet. We heard the voice of the half-stunned coachman over the hedge. He promised to take our luggage to the station, so we determined to splash there, which we did, leaving the policeman a little richer and the coachman roundly abusing everybody and everything connected with the livery stable to which he belonged. As we saw the train coming we got on to dry land and did a run for it, caught it, and took our wet feet home, leaving the luggage to follow the next day.

I made a "Spoffins Sketch" * of an accident that happened to us outside the Bermondsey Institute; but the real facts are amusing.

The hall-keeper had put our baskets on a four-wheeler, into which Nellie and I got, when the man wished us good-night, shut the cab door, and entered the building. The cabby, an old man, pulled the horse till it was almost at right angles with the cab, when he attempted to turn, with the result that the horse pulled the top-heavy cab right over. I found my head and shoulders resting on the road in a mass of broken glass, and my sister—who, by the way, is not so light as her entertainment—sitting on top of me. The cabman took no heed of us, but led his horse

* A series of humorous tales which ran for a long time in *Pick Me Up*, and are re-appearing in *Funny Cuts*.

away with the broken shafts, and we never saw him again. The road, though in London, was a very quiet one, and our shouts brought no assistance. The bundle of brass rods, which were done up in a leather and green baize case, lay across my sister, and prevented her getting at the window to open it. A few moments passed, and we heard somebody come along and stop at the cab. It was a convivialist returning home, as Ibsen says, "with vine leaves in his hair." This is what we heard—

"Wha's this? A cab, and no horse! 'Strornary! most 'strornary!" (hic).

"Hullo! open the window!" (from us inside).

"Goodness gracious, it's full of people! Alrigh'. Here comes the lifeboat!"

The allusion to the lifeboat we found was an allegorical reference to himself, because, as he climbed up on to the side of the cab, he sang a song to the effect that the ship was on fire, and that it was advisable to man the lifeboat. Unfortunately for us, his singing diverted his attention from the locality of the window, through which he put his knee. He smothered us with broken glass, at the same time that he lost his balance and rolled off the cab into the road. By shifting the rods and treading upon me, my sister raised herself, and, putting her head through the broken window, was about to call for help when the hall-keeper came out of the Institute, and, to his amazement, saw the cab he imagined by this time at Waterloo Station lying on its side in the gutter, without horse or driver, and my sister's head looking out through the broken window. We left the overturned cab where it had fallen, and, taking another, caught the last train to Richmond. Our would-be rescuer wished us good-night, saying, "Bu' for me there might have been a mos' ser'us (hic)

acts—dent," and proceeded to bed in the derelict cab!

Our experience of Glasgow serves to show how beginners may be taken in. A man wrote to me that he would give us two-thirds of the "gross receipts" if we would perform at the Windsor Halls, we to pay for advertising and supply printing. In small places where the advertising is slight these are very good terms, but in a large city, and for a new hall, to which no one will go, they mean ruin. When we arrived we found that the man was a baker, who knew nothing of the show business. He had been told that if he engaged D. Lynn, and advertised him, he would make a fortune. He tried it, and lost heavily through the cost of advertising, which fact he had not forgotten when, in his attempt to recuperate himself over my visit, he stipulated that I should bear this expense. On our opening night a vast crowd assembled, who cheered and laughed, and left in a state of high delight. When I inquired what the receipts were I was told that we had taken *fifteen shillings!*—about as much as we could have got, say, at the Ham schoolroom, two miles from home. The surging crowd, I was told, were "complimentaries." Next night, with the highest eulogiums from the Press, we took so little that, after the first piece, I told the audience that they could have their money back, as it was not possible for us to go on. Two Scotch working men got up, and one said that his mate and he had had their money's worth already, and it was a shame that such good work should be so badly patronised.

I lost about thirty or forty pounds over that trip. We had the heavy "fit-up" then, and, to save expense, my wife and I came back by steamer from Edinburgh, my sister returning by train. We felt

pretty miserable with the recollection of our losses, which the lonely steamer, with only an officer in charge of a regiment for company, did not serve to dissipate. We had such terrific weather that the engines were stopped in the night and the hatches battened down, while the steamer rode at anchor. My wife, who is scared out of her life at a mouse, was as calm and collected as I have ever seen her, though we thought the steamer was going under. I have been plenty of voyages, and seen some rough weather, but that winter's night off the East Coast was worse than anything I ever remember. As we drove over London Bridge we passed the officer and detachment, who gave us a salute, which was the last we saw of them.

Mrs German Reed had told me that in the country I should go round and call upon the gentry, and explain what my entertainment was, as, by seeing me, they would have confidence. At Faversham I accordingly hired a nice trap, and drove round and called on the residents, with some amusing results.

At the first house I had hardly attempted to give the man-servant a card before a gentleman came out and shook me cordially by the hand. I shook hands, but I said, "I don't think you know who I am." "I can make a very shrewd guess," he replied, and insisted upon my having some refreshment. I endeavoured to tell him what I wanted, but he said he would listen to the business part of my visit presently, which he would have done had not the arrival of another visitor, whose card preceded him on a salver, made the gentleman upon whom I had called pause in helping me to wine, and say, "Then who the devil are you?" I was then allowed to explain, whereupon he burst out laughing, and said,

"I thought you were Mr —, the hop broker, who has just arrived from London."

I hope this gentleman sold his "pockets" at good rates. He looked very merry when he came to the Town Hall in the evening, so we'll presume he did.

After that we drove to Earl Sondes' place. I had had enough of it, but my wife urged me on, saying "that he could not eat me." We drove up to the house and I alighted, when a large Newfoundland dog came up, wagging his tail. I patted him on the head, and said, "I am afraid that you are falling into the same mistake as the hop grower."

A servant opened the door, and I sent in my card. He returned, and said that Lady Mary would see me; and, as soon as he had said so, an aristocratic and pretty girl entered, and asked me if I came about the entertainment that was to be given, adding, "What's it like?" I answered her by giving her a programme, which she took to her father. She returned, and said, "Papa will take six seats," when a child burst out of a room into the hall. Coming to me, she said, "Why didn't you bring Irving with you?" and ran away in high glee. Lady Mary said, "Do not mind her; she's my younger sister." The little one would have made more tender inquiries about my former manager, but she was taken charge of and removed as I took my leave. That the reader may understand the child's query, I should say that on my programme was the letter Sir Henry had written me, which he permitted me to publish.

Being mistaken for someone else reminds me of a visit I paid to a private asylum at Hawkhurst. When playing at Hastings I was told that they engaged entertainments at Hawkhurst, so I took the train to Ticehurst Road, intending to walk to

Hawkhurst, a distance of about twelve miles. When I got out at the station I asked a porter to direct me to the asylum. He replied, "There's a carriage come down from the 'Establishment,' and nobody have come by this train for it. It be a goodish step, and the carriage be empty, you'd better go in that." Following his advice, I entered the carriage, and was driven to the asylum. I was at once shown into a room, where the doctor hurriedly came to me, and, as far as I recollect, this sort of conversation took place—

"This will be your first engagement here?"

"Yes; but I am not exactly engaged yet. I came with a view to be engaged."

"Of course you are engaged."

"But what about terms?"

"Did I say nothing about terms?"

"No."

"I said usual terms in my telegram."

"Telegram! What telegram?"

"Oh, you haven't received my telegram?"

"No."

"No? Well—but—if you didn't receive my wire, why did you come?"

"To see if I could obtain an engagement here. You see, I have been to Bethlehem, and am known to Dr Savage and Dr Wood——"

"Yes, yes, the credentials you sent are quite satisfactory."

"Did I send any credentials?" I wondered if an agent at Tunbridge Wells had forwarded one of my circulars. "I think if I might explain——"

"If you will kindly listen to me I will tell you what I want. It is an old gentleman, not very violent, but still he requires a firm hand."

I began to feel a bit uneasy. They have put me

into the room with one of the patients, I thought. I wondered whether he would be too much for me.

"What is the matter with you?" exclaimed the doctor, impatiently.

"My name is Ganthony, and I want to know if I can give——"

"Ganthon! Are you not Mr Rainby, from St Leonards, the keeper for whom I sent the carriage to meet the ten o'clock train? Good gracious, you will be taking me for one of my patients!"

We went to this lovely establishment at Hawkhurst after that whenever in the neighbourhood, and played in the pretty little theatre there. On the occasion of our first performance at Hawkhurst we gave a matinée and an evening performance at a new hall in the village. As Dr Newington kindly mentioned our visit to people about, we had a good attendance in the afternoon, those driving to the entertainment inducing others they met on the road to join them; so that, just as we began to think that no one would come, a string of vehicles drove up, and the room was soon comfortably full. The people laughed till an old lady cried, "Please stop. Oh! do please stop!" She could laugh no more.

In the evening we began to wonder if any of the townspeople would follow the example set by their betters. My sister looked out of the window, and said, "There is nothing there but yellow gravel at present." It was a cold, moonlight night in November, and, as she is near-sighted, she had mistaken the upturned faces outside for the yellow gravel of the road. "I believe those are all faces we see," remarked my wife; and so it proved. When the doors were opened the money takers and their tables were carried before the crowd along the passage and rammed against the doors of the hall.

Hawkhurst had never known such a crush. We could not find room for much more than half the people who applied for admission. Circumstances here, over which we had no control, again favoured us.

The other hall was under control of one of those men who consider "acting" wicked, while conjuring is God-like, and a magic lantern entertainment on a par with a religious service, in consequence of which the good folk of Hawkhurst had grown weary of the conjuror, and the beauties of the magic lantern had began to pale; but when the wicked "acting" came to the opposition hall they went for it, and to it. The afternoon carriages driving there had been an advertisement for us, which, together with the fact of our having been at the establishment, clinched the whole matter.

It may be of interest if a copy of our programme, No. 1 of the "Evenings from Home," were reprinted here, that the character of the entertainment may be understood—

PART I.
"THE LADY HELP."
By ROBERT GANTHONY.

ARGUMENT.—Leonardo Smythe leaves home to avoid meeting Sarah Scrivins, to whom he objects on account of her name. The young lady calls at his lodgings, captivates him, and overcomes his objections by offering to change her name to that of Smythe. The sketch introduces the following impersonations and song, Braga's Serenata, with violin obbligato:—

MAJOR SMYTHE	The Irascible and Military Parent	MR R. GANTHONY.
LEONARDO SMYTHE	The Undutiful and Artistic Offspring	
SARAH SCRIVINS	The Lady Help	MISS N. GANTHONY.
MRS O'FLYNN	The Lodging-House Keeper	MR R. GANTHONY.

PART II.
 "ON BOARD THE *REVERIE*."
 By ROBERT GANTHONY.

ARGUMENT.—To avoid undertaking the part of Romeo in some private theatricals in which his cousin is anxious to play Juliet, Frank impersonates a number of characters who in various ways ridicule the play. Kate discovers his plot, and outwits him. This sketch is enacted in the cabin of the yacht *Reverie*, and introduces the following impersonations and music:—

FRANK MERRIVAIL	- Owner of the <i>Reverie</i>	MR R. GANTHONY.
PETER	- - - An Old Salt Song—"The Mighty Deep."	
COUNT CONFITURE	- A French Nobleman Flute Solo or Song—"Ma Normandie."	MISS N. GANTHONY.
COLONEL HOWARD	- - - From Utah Song—"Nancy Till" and Banjo Selections.	
KATY MERRIVAIL	- - - Frank's Cousin Songs—"Autumn Violets" and "Lingering Fancies."	MISS N. GANTHONY.
MISS ANGELINA PRIM	- Katy's Governess Song—"Love was once a Little Boy."	

The press criticisms we had were usually very complimentary, but when they were not, there was generally some other reason than slipshod work on our part which brought us a slating. A Carshalton paper gave us a curiously sneering notice, which turned out to have been written by the man Lefroy, who murdered a gentleman in a railway carriage the day after visiting our entertainment. He was described as on a Carshalton paper, so I looked over the tickets and found his card among them. A man with his head filled with murder, I claim, is not in a fit state to criticise a light entertainment.

The second adverse criticism was at Croydon, where the editor of one of the papers, having got the worst of a political contest with a friend who took us down there, had his revenge on him by insulting us in an offensive and badly-written criticism.

My friend at Croydon found that it was not so easy

to get his acquaintances to flock to see a new entertainment. They didn't know what it was, and were afraid of being let in for a dreary evening. We had the best seats fairly well filled, but those at the back were almost empty. In a room adjoining, my friend discovered a prayer meeting in full progress. His mouth watered as he looked at all this material for manufacturing a back seat audience. When we reached our second piece the prayer meeting had come to an end, and, at the suggestion of my friend, it streamed in through a side door into our vacant back seats. What a difference an audience makes to a performance! As soon as the prayer meeting settled down the entertainment went with a roar.

While at Hastings we stayed at Lucknow House, which is just opposite the "Music Hall," where the German Reeds were playing a pretty little piece by Arthur Law, called "Cherry Tree Farm." My wife and I were at the open window of our sitting-room when the footlights of the stage opposite were lighted, which we could see, as the blinds of the hall were not down. Wondering why they should be lighted so early, curiosity made us keep an eye upon the hall. We did not wait long for an explanation, for Fanny Holland entered left upper entrance with no dress on her shoulders, and a pair of curling tongs in her hand, followed by Edith Brandon from the opposite side, also in her stays and petticoat, and armed with a pair of curlings tongs. They both came down to the footlights and conversed as they heated their irons at the gas and applied them to their heads. One lady is now Mrs Arthur Law, the other is the Countess of Barchester, and I have kept to the same old name since I started.

I must not forget before we get away from Croydon to mention my meeting a gentleman there who intro-

duced himself to me at the hall the morning after the entertainment. He could hardly speak on account of a stutter that monopolised nearly all his conversation. When he did make himself coherent he informed me that he also was an entertainer. This was so startling that I had to find out whether the man was joking ; but his programme, with his portrait on it—which he brought from his pocket—put his statement beyond doubt.

“ Y-y-y-you m-m-m-ay have n-no-no-no-no-ticed th-th-th-that I have a sl-sl-sl-sl-slight imp-imp-imp-imp-impediment in my sp-sp-sp-speech.”

Of course I replied that I had not observed it.

“ W-w-w-well t-t-t-that all leaves me when I per-per-per-perform.”

I heard of this gentleman’s visit to the Faversham Institute, where he was engaged to give his “show.” A few members of the committee went down to the hall to offer him a welcome ; and their surprise when he opened his mouth may be imagined. They looked at one another, and to make sure said—

“ Are you the gentleman who is to entertain here to-night ? ”

“ Y-y-y-y-yes ; I be-be-be-be-believe t-t-t-t-that I am to have the hon-hon-hon-hon-hon-honour.”

In a great state of alarm the committee left him and called upon all the available talent in Faversham —lady vocalists, the curate, and a zither solo from the newly-established German barber, etc., who all came in the evening to throw themselves into the breach. But there was no breach in which to throw themselves.

The entertainer came on and carried through his programme with a perfectly fluent delivery, as the committee sat in a state of fury at the way they imagined they had been made game of, which, as soon as the affair was over, they determined to have

set right. No sooner had the entertainer retired for the night than the naturally exasperated committee, thirsting for his gore, rushed behind, filling the air with threats.

"I-I-I-I th-th-th-think I ge-ge-ge-ge-ge—"

"Stop it," roared the incensed secretary. "You may think it a good joke, but we are a bit sick of it. What do you mean by making fools of us all?"

"You me-me-me—"

"Stop it," roared the committee.

It was long into the night before the entertainer could explain that he never stuttered on the stage when he had committed the words to memory. And this was remarkable, but perfectly true, as if he forgot anything and had to ask for it at the wings, he would stutter terribly.

In reply to a Jew *entrepreneur* named Garcia, of Manchester, I wrote explaining that our entertainment was of the nature of a drawing-room one, and that it was only suited to a medium-sized hall, which I mentioned always to prevent anyone engaging us under a false impression.

On arrival at Manchester, we found the place covered with my picture posters, which he had ordered from my printers, and, to our disgust, that we formed part of an enormous variety entertainment at—of all places in the world—the large Free Trade Hall.

Directly I saw Mr Garcia I remonstrated with him, but he said—"Do as little as you can," and ordered his men to put up my "fit-up." We were first—the worst turn—and I was not allowed to take away my "fit-up" till his long programme had been gone through with.

He had only got me for my posters, Sir Henry Irving's letter, and my "fit-up." I not only had a difficulty in getting any money from him, but he

wrote a scandalous letter to Irving complaining of my entertainment, to which Sir Henry wrote in reply, that, after hearing the facts of the case, his sympathies were with me. I heard of Garcia's death later in a pauper lunatic asylum.

When giving our entertainment at Rickmansworth I called upon Lady Catherine Coke. The servant was a little severe, but she told him to ask me in directly she received my card. A picture of Henry le Jeune, A.R.A., caught my eye as I entered. Lady Coke observing this, asked me if I recognised it? I replied that I knew whose work it was, as I often went sketching with the artist. She told me that Mr W. S. Gilbert was staying at her house with Mrs Gilbert, and that she would try and induce them to go to my entertainment.

At the hall we had a good audience, including W. S. Gilbert, Lady Coke, and party.

I called on one schoolmaster who received me with—"I suppose you think your entertainment better than anyone else's?" So I cut our interview very short, and as I heard that he was hated in the village I was back in his place in an hour as an old military gentleman who had a son to educate. I kept the man, who was now as obsequious as he was previously insulting, from his dinner while he answered all sorts of questions about school terms, food, etc. Hearing that Lady Coke was going to our entertainment he went also, and found the military gentleman who had called upon him on the stage under the name I had sent in, viz., "Major Smythe."

A dog and monkey circus followed us at the Winter Gardens, Bournemouth. On our way to the beach on Sunday, we called in at the gardens to see if our things were all right. While drinking a glass of water, I saw the monkeys all holding out their

hands for some, their eyes blinking as they travelled from mine to the water. It took my wife and sister about an hour before we had completely satisfied the thirst of those poor creatures.

A vicar once engaged us to go to a remote village in Gloucestershire, and I am sorry that I have mislaid the bill which announced our coming. It stated that "Professor Gaurthorny and another would give a performance of two persons on two large tables so that all could see in the School Room. Tickets at Bowl's. To begin at 7.30."

We actually gave our entertainment on two tables and had supper at the vicarage, but as to what happened after the hospitality of that jovial vicar that evening my memory retains no trace.

The numerous applications we received to return when we had anything new to those who had engaged us, demonstrated to me the fact that by writing fresh plays I could not only keep, but increase, our connection, and be able to rely with certainty on an income with which to meet my liabilities and give up the speculating, to which I was as unsuited as was our entertainment.

My difficulty was to continually write for only two characters, the opportunities for plot being naturally restricted; so when my brother Richard returned from America he joined me, and, with two of us doubling parts, I obtained increased opportunity for effect.

In 1886-7 we had six different programmes perfected, containing a dozen little plays with about fifty different impersonations. Each play had a different set of costumes and properties, and we had elaborate lists of every article we required. These were all checked off into the baskets according to the particular "Evening" we had to give. But for

some such arrangement we should have had endless confusion.

We would return in the morning after giving No. 1 Evening, empty, repack, and give, say, No. 5 at night.

When I had six evenings perfected I supposed that I could begin again on the old stuff, but another change took place which upset all my plans.

The institutes, for reasons already explained, ceased to draw, and with the opportunity of making an income from that source, ceased also our "Evenings from Home."

The History of "Pick Me Up."

HOW I BECAME A CONTRIBUTOR.

MARION SPIELMAN—the now well-known writer on Art—I look upon as my literary godfather. He always advised me to write, and when Malcolm Salomon, on behalf of Lever Bros.—the soap people—brought out a paper called *Sunlight*, he invited me, at my friend's suggestion, to contribute a story. Writing a dramatic sketch, which is all dialogue and stage direction, would have been an easy matter, but a story is a very different thing and seemed to me an awful undertaking.

A "P. and O." captain was staying with us on a visit; also a young lady; also a fox terrier. The dog whined so much in the night, that the captain went down to it, as did also the young lady—she in a pretty dressing-gown, he in a suit of Chinese-looking pyjamas.

They met at the tool-shed, let out the dog, and, so that it might have a prolonged scamper over

my carefully-raked beds, they chatted half through that hot summer night under the spreading codlin tree which ornamented our lawn.

"Here is material for a *Sunlight* story!" I exclaimed next morning when I heard of it, and by supper time my first literary effort was finished. It was then forwarded to *Sunlight* and accepted. I next sent in a humorous sketch — "Defying the Lightning"—which was declined. Then I reverted to sentiment, and wrote another "story," when *Sunlight* abruptly and unceremoniously terminated its career.

In reply to an advertisement for "short stories," I forwarded mine, which the advertiser appeared to like, as he kept it, together with the stamps I had been asked to enclose for its return.

When my wife drew my attention to another advertisement—this time for "humorous articles"—I felt that my enthusiasm for literature was waning; but as she enjoined me to send "Defying the Lightning," which, as she cogently remarked, "was doing no good in my drawer," I consented on condition that no stamps were to be forwarded for its return.

When I had forgotten all about the matter, a letter came in a foreign hand, saying that "'Defying the Lightning' would suit," "had I any more?" and "could I call in reference to becoming a contributor?" "Contributor" sounded all right, so I took the train to town and called at the address given.

Having an idea that newspapers were only hatched in the neighbourhood of Fleet Street, I was a little surprised to find that my prospective editor had his journalistic incubator off Gower Street. I found it with an elaborate title in white paint in German.

On the door was something about "Geschaft" and "Lehrer," all as comprehensible to me as are the Dutch notices outside a Johannesburg Post Office to a newly-arrived emigrant from the wilds of Coupar-Angus.

A man who follows a chequered career is always learning something. It was now my privilege to be initiated into the mysteries of journalism. On entering, I awoke a meek little man who was sleeping peacefully on a sheet of blotting paper on the table in front of him.

"Vas vollen zie, mein Herr?" he inquired, which remark caused me to think that he might be a foreigner.

"I fancy I have come to the wrong shop," I replied. "Is that this?" and I showed him my letter of appointment. After examining it, he muttered something which sounded like "ganz recht" and disappeared into a cupboard.

His disappearance was followed by the sound of a precipitate arrangement of furniture and closing of drawers in an adjoining apartment, which I know now to have been the hasty secretion of the carefully guarded and embryotic *Pick Me Up*.

When the sounds ceased a German gentleman, highly spectacled, burst out of the cupboard and rushed to greet me, and with an excessively exuberant and boisterous gesture drew me into what was a passage in disguise; in a moment I found myself once more in Gower Street, having turned the corner inside the building.

The apartment in which I now recovered from my surprise was a sort of miniature board-room, manufactured from what was a drawing-room in the days when the house was residential and not business-like.

With a wealth of welcome, which created in me an instinctive feeling of distrust, my prospective employer waived me to a chair, patted me on the back when I sat down, and became so affectionately demonstrative that I feared every moment he was going to kiss me. As I had heard of foreigners doing such things, I kept myself ready to resist an osculatory attack. When absolute strangers are so overpoweringly familiar and friendly before they know you, their friendship, when they do, is not always to be trusted—"so let it be with Cæsar."

"What has the notice on your door in German to do with English journalism?" I asked.

"Nothing," was the answer. After which I learned that my German acquaintance was the head of a society for looking after newly-arrived Teutons who came over to learn our language and teach their own. This society also acted as agents, supplying schools with teachers at wholesale prices as soon as they were ready and situations offered. To this information he added, with a significant smile, "when anything comes really worth having, I take it myself."

"As a conjuror does engagements when he manages a firm's entertainment bureau."

"Does he?"

"Yes," I replied; "human nature is much the same in Bond Street as in Gower Street."

He then told me that he had invented and brought out an instructive game for children—I think on the subject of our recent reigning monarchs, with whom a German would naturally have some acquaintance. I knew nothing about journalism, as I have said, and accepted the fact of his bringing out this kindergarten pastime as being a sufficiently severe test of his capacity to start a comic paper.

I wish I could here reproduce the original heading,

a few illustrations, and a page of matter as I saw it when it was brought with much caution from a drawer and laid before me on the green cloth of that table in Gower Street. It was about as unpromising a sheet as could be well imagined. But there were other elements, not in the paper, but in the broad-browed, spectacled German before me, which I thought would make the success of almost anything he undertook had he, like W. S. Gilbert's hero, been "born an Englishman," and imbued with good, paying-in-the-end, John Bull straightforwardness, instead of so much continental diplomacy. The starting and success of *Pick Me Up* go to prove what can be done by pluck and unceasing perseverance even in these days of journalistic competition, when new papers are published every week—day, I might say. Failure might easily have been the fate of *Pick Me Up*; and I may say, without much fear of contradiction, that if I had not gone to that office in Gower Street, and given my time and influence to it, the paper would not have been in existence to-day. If ever I go in for starting a paper again I shall have a contract in black and white, stamped at Somerset House, before I let my enthusiasm run away with me and work as I did for promises, which, when success came, I could not enforce.

However, to return to the room in Gower Street. The heading of the first *Pick Me Up* represented two over-fed Cupids, obviously "made in Germany," holding up a scroll, more suggestive of rolled dough than paper, to which they pointed, inviting the spectator to regard the name *Pick Me Up* printed thereon. The humorous matter was childish and chestnutty, as I daresay mine would be if I made a collection of jokes in

Germany. Max O'Rell has proved how an untravelled foreigner can pick up crusted wheezes of all nationalities, and imagine them indigenous to the country in which he happens to have sought for "copy."

Having shown me, as it were, how not to do it, he next produced a copy of *Fliegendeblätter*, which was to be our source of inspiration. I hadn't been for years amusing the public without becoming a little in touch with what it wanted, and knowing what it considered funny and entertaining. I looked upon the production of a paper as I would the production of a play or an entertainment, and I criticised and judged it from that standpoint.

We had a "backer," of course, for teaching German, like entertaining, is not a means of amassing superfluous wealth. Our "backer," wiser than either of us, made his money out of religion, supplying the devout with ecclesiastical ornaments—brass candlesticks, lecterns, stained glass windows, or other articles which are considered consistent with the simplicity of true Christianity.

It was about two years after my first visit to Gower Street that *Pick Me Up* was published, so we did not submit the first number to the public without giving it due consideration.

The name was objected to because it was that of a drink! but I said, "So is *Punch*." The name had this advantage—it was difficult to imitate. I advocated *no politics*, as a political paper, I thought, might limit its subscribers to those who shared its views. This was agreed to, but my suggestion that we should have theatrical criticisms was tabooed, and yet in the hands of "Jingle" they remain a feature. I argued strongly for "process" work, but, with the exception of a single "Meissenbach" weekly, we had none till 1889. Our motto was *give the public the best—the best*

artists, writers, paper, best everything, and in this we acted on true business principles.

When I wrote "Spoffins and his Clock," it was suggested that I should write a series of "Spoffins Sketches." I said that I could not think of any more subjects, but I found that I had underrated my powers of invention, for I wrote sixty right off. My pay was to come when the paper succeeded. The sketches were republished in book form.

At the end of the year, when the paper caught on, our director grew what the lower classes call "'aughty," wanting people to take off their boots before they entered his presence, as though he were a Turkish bath ; but *Pick Me Up* has yet to be started, so to that period I will briefly revert.

Offices were taken in Southampton Street—where *Tit Bits* has risen phoenix-like—and as there was nothing in it that would grow stale, we printed the two first numbers at once, in order to be quite free to sell the copies when the rush came.

On the day of publication an army of ragamuffins besieged our doors for "starters," i.e., free copies, with which they informed us it was the custom of the trade to supply them, and on these profitable terms they proposed to dispose of our first number.

Rid of the rabble, a calm fell upon us ; there was no rush, and though *Pick Me Up* was published no one came to buy it, and the people went up and down the Strand as though nothing had happened. One man certainly rushed in, took a copy, asked if it contained a pattern this week, and left ; but he returned for his penny later on, said he thought we were Weldon's. No advertisements, no wall posters, no puffs preliminary heralded the paper's existence, and, as a natural consequence, no one knew anything about it.

Sick of the solitude of the office we went outside

and watched a man trying to sell some, but no one would look at them.

"Dey moost py dem," muttered the director, "only a penny!"

"I don't believe they would take them if you offered them for nothing."

We tried this, but nearly everyone refused them when offered, so we returned to Southampton Street. When we arrived there the climax was too much for the director after what he had gone through, and he broke down and lay on the sofa. I pitied him, for I don't like to see a man crushed who had made a good fight, but, as my pity did him no good, I sat down beside him to see what could be done.

"The wholesalers," he murmured, as gently as Richelieu asked for "absolute power."

It was now noon, and, as there was no time to be lost, I filled a four-wheeler with copies of the first number and drove round to the wholesale houses, at which I was not received with open arms. They were not even interested in the paper which had taken us so much time and thought to create, but I had called to get them to take those copies and I didn't leave till they did.

"There are too many papers already," remarked the first wholesaler.

"Some people think there are too many cats," I replied, "and yet you have a cat on your counter where one of our papers would be just as appropriate an ornament." I laid a copy down as I said so, when the cat purred, walked across, and sat upon it. "You see the cat says there is room enough for both." This amused the man, and he leisurely looked over the paper saying, when he had done so, "I'll take so many quires on sale or return." I didn't know what he meant, but I relieved the cab of as

many as he would take, patted the cat on the head—as Dick Whittington did his after the rat incident—and drove off to the other wholesalers whose addresses he had kindly given me.

When I returned in that empty cab I felt that *Pick Me Up* was not only published but started. It wasn't a great start which I had given it, but it saved the situation.

"Why doesn't your friend the 'backer' come?" I asked.

"He has heard it is not a success or he would be here," he answered—of course, this was only a friendship made in Germany.

What a time of anxiety it was with *Pick Me Up* "in the beginning," and how eagerly we waited to discover if the week immediately passed was better than its predecessors as regards circulation. How we hated the boy who brought back the "returns"—the papers which the shops could not sell—and banged them, as it appeared to us with a certain sense of triumph, on our counter.

It was amusing to note how accurately our success was gauged by the class of contributor who came and offered his services. Early in our career we had a visit from a French countess with an American accent—the lady who offered to write W. S. Gilbert's obituary for nothing—a lady who combined the concoction of lyrics with laudatory descriptions of London hotels in the American newspapers and concert singing. I heard of her again in South Africa, which she had visited before me as a vocalist and *litterateuse*; she had given the *jeunesse juif dorée* fits in a novel she had written about Johannesburg, which they seemed to think an awful lark.

We had all the writers calling upon us at first

whom no other paper would employ, and all the artists whose illustrations no other editor would accept, until as we advanced the best names were included among our contributors.

For a few weeks we wondered whether Smith would take any and put them on his bookstalls. One day Smith sent in for some, and there were great rejoicings in consequence. Others increased their orders, but the expenses remained greater than the profits, our backer was homœopathic in his assistance, and the fight became one of finance.

The first and second numbers remained in the office a monument to our miscalculation. Everybody in the trade seemed always to smile at the *pile we had made*, till these "back numbers" gave us the hump, and we bequeathed them to butchers, bakers, or anyone who would have them, with the result that they had to be reprinted at great expense.

I remember one man telling us that we must not send out first specimen copies without cutting off the ends to prevent the shopkeeper selling them. We did so with great labour, and only insulted the trade in consequence. If they had sold them, what of it? It would have been the best advertisement we could have had.

Then we got behind with our payments at the printers', and how they stormed! Ye gods, how they stormed at the director! But he got the best of them, for they soon had no alternative but to go on printing the paper or lose what was owing them by it.

I offered Willing *Pick Me Up's* advertisements, as he always attended to any order which I gave him, for which I paid when he sent in his monthly account. He was very nice, but he said, "A *new paper*, Mr Ganthony; but, of course, if you like to guarantee the account—" This lack of confidence in a new

paper, in my then enthusiastic state, surprised me more than it would now. I mentioned the matter at the "Savage," and my friends said, "Willing is quite right; the paper will never succeed." This was the opinion held of *Pick Me Up* in those days, when we skated as near the brink of bankruptcy as was possible without liquidation.

"In the beginning" I designed the headpieces, drew comic sketches—not those hideous things which disfigured the first numbers. They were purchased before I came upon the scene, or the money wouldn't have been wasted. I made comic "copy" of our troubles at the office, at which I at first assisted, so that I can claim that I have done everything in publishing a paper but receive an adequate monetary reward for my labours.

The quality of our talent improved with our circulation. Leslie Wilson joined us. Goldsworthy gave up offering us verses, and did the dramatic criticisms. I was recalled to the fold after a period of entertaining, and wrote extra Spoffins Sketches—"Baby's Diary," "Playing the Fool," "Essays on Everything," etc.—when the paper went right away into public favour, and we saw our way out of the wood.

An advertising agent bought the two pages for a weekly sum, which, as Fred Bowyer's song says, "was a little bit of sugar for the bird."

The cigarettes, *Pick Me Up* puzzle, tea, etc. etc., all gave evidence of the ideas and schemes of which our director was the possessor; but his last idea of writing a play because he had been bitten by a dog shows that a profusion of ideas is not always accompanied by the exhibition of common sense.

If the director—who knew nothing of dramatic art, who had never contributed a line to his paper—had

consulted me I could have told him whether there was anything in his idea or not; but, instead, he collaborated with his theatrical critic. But dramatic creation and criticism are different things. He diverted his mind from his paper for over a year, produced a very poor play, and involved *Pick Me Up* in a law suit.

"I veal it here," he would say, referring to the play, and indicating the locality of the sensation by striking his breathing pump.

"You will feel it here later," I replied, touching his pocket, and so it proved.

The play was sent to the London managers, and, coming from the head of a successful paper, it received attention. It remained some time at the Strand Theatre, which, after its arrival, announced a new comedy, called "A Lucky Dog." This fact, and certain resemblances to his play, caused the director to give a hurried copyright performance at the Ladbroke Hall, which was duly and favourably criticised by his collaborateur in the pages of *Pick Me Up*, a sketch being given of the director playing in his own farce. When the "Lucky Dog" appeared the director seemed to recognise the animal as his, and promptly accused the Strand people of dog stealing, with the result that they brought an action against him and got damages, which led to the director losing the paper I had assisted him to establish. At a recent date I believe Mr Ross and Mr Moor held the option of *Pick Me Up*, which they transferred to Messrs Ingram Bros. They made several thousand pounds over the transaction, while those who had slaved and endured so much to establish the paper got next to nothing.

I remember reading something a long time ago

in Virgil beginning, *Sic vos non vobis*, in which he alludes to the bees making honey, but not for themselves. I wonder if Virgil ever had a hand in starting an illustrated comic paper?



Fashions in Entertainments.

PEOPLE do not understand that there is as much fashion in amusements as in bonnets, and what the public will support at one period they will not at another. And so I am constantly asked why I do not give public performances as Albert Smith, Woodin, Maccabe did. It appears to me, therefore, not out of place here to devote a few lines to the change in entertainments during the past half-century.

In 1832 Mathews the elder gave his thirteenth annual entertainment at the Adelphi Theatre, and not only filled it, but with no one to assist him kept the audience amused for *three hours!* This would be impossible for one man to do now at any London theatre; and although I can form no idea of Mr Mathews' entertaining powers, his matter—which I have before me—a modern audience would not listen to, not merely because it is out of date, but because it is badly written. This is a specimen of the versification which breaks up heavy columns of talk:—

“Take care and don’t be penny wise
And pound foolish; open your eyes,
And with your money don’t you part
But for its worth in the auction mart.”

Sir Walter Besant said to me once, “There is a good deal of slipshod work in some of the old writers.” And I am inclined to think that in the

days of no competition entertainers were also prone to take it easily.

The published books give about a couple of dozen pages of the cream of Mathews' entertainment. From these I made a short selection, which, though I had special music written, and gave it at Charter House School to an indulgent audience, with whom I was an old favourite, I could not make a success of it.

Woodin, whose "Carpet Bag and Sketch Book" was well known, nursed me on his knee when I was a youngster, and I remember now, as though it were yesterday, his bowing to my mother when he came on to the platform, which is more than I ever did when I saw her in the audience. He felt the change of fashion before he retired, for he wrote and advised me to stick to the stage.

Woodin, I think, was about the last who ducked down under a table and put on wigs. Maccabe followed, and made a complete change in the manner which is now being introduced on the halls as a "novelty."

In "Evenings from Home" I went again further than Maccabe, and instead of saying, "I shall next be So-and-So," I introduced my impersonations in the sequence of dramatic effect and the evolution of a story, and, having my sister with me, substituted character-acting for mere impersonation, plus the introduction of vocal and instrumental music. This paid at first, even when touring round the country, but the wave of change soon overtook and swamped us. Then the Institutes came to the rescue, and we worked for fees until they knocked under. And the ship which I had built with such care, launched, and floated, foundered and supported us no more.

Grossmith and Chevalier made touring pay through

the exceptional circumstances which brought them so prominently before the public—in one case the boom of the music halls, and the other the success of the Savoy comic operas, of which their clever work and management enabled them to take advantage. But the fact that neither now finds it profitable to tour confirms what I advance—that as a continuous business the touring of small entertainments is at an end.

Samuel Brandram was the first to recite entire plays from memory. His first essays were at the Parochial Schools, Richmond, *en amateur*, where my sisters, Edith and Marian, sang Locke's music, which gained them the sobriquet of "Brandram's witches," when he recited "Macbeth." They also sang "Where the bee sucks," "Full fathoms deep," etc., to his "Tempest." In this musical assistance Arthur Cecil Blount, of Mortlake (Arthur Cecil), took part just before he adopted the stage as a profession, and followed John Parry in the German Reeds' entertainment.

The lack of interest felt in dumb show plays—to which I refer under "Music Halls"—is another illustration of how fashion affects entertainments.



How I Became a Book Writer.

THE "chicken fever" is a difficult disease to eradicate from the system, and I was not wholly cured even after I had returned to England and become an actor and comic journalist. The money paid for eggs and poultry to France brought on the fever again, with the result that I wrote a book on the artificial rearing and incubation of poultry. With this work in my pocket I was wandering about the Strand looking for a publisher, when I met Sachs, of the *Field*, just

opposite the offices of the *Exchange and Mart*. Here was the very man to consult, and I did so.

"Take it in there," he said, with a movement of his elbow towards 170 Strand, and hurried off to deliver himself of his account of the last football match. I followed his advice, with the result that Mr Upcot Gill declined my poultry book, but gave me a commission to write "Charitable Entertainments, and how to Work them with Success and Profit," which was so successful that he subsequently published "Practical Ventriloquism." When I took him the MS. of this to read he looked at a page or so, and said, "I'll publish it."

"But you haven't read it!" I exclaimed.

"I know," he said, "that when a man opens a book like that it is all right."

The critics who gave the book such unqualified praise judged it as the publisher did, for they could not gauge the technical accuracy of what I had formulated by experience, because acquiring ventriloquism by use of a scientific thesis was unprecedented.

I remember the *Saturday Review* gave it a column and a half, and this, or some other leading paper, alluded to it as being the most interesting book on the subject since the time of "Valentine Vox."

Discovering that amateurs wanted to amuse their friends as ventriloquists, conjurors, etc., but did not care to take the trouble to acquire these arts seriously, I wrote a number of travesties, in which, by the assistance of confederates, ventriloquism, second sight, thought reading, etc., could be given for the trouble of committing a page or two of matter to memory and rehearsing it, the broad fun of which compensated for the real thing. This book Mr Gill published under the title of "Bunkum Entertainments."

The republication of Spoffins, which was to pay me for my fealty to *Pick Me Up*, was discontinued, as the first book was found to interfere with the sale of the bound volumes of the paper, in which I had no interest. When I asked for my share of the profits on the first volume, I was told that there were no profits, which meant *that there were no profits for me*.



How I Became a Song Writer.

WITH my first comic song about the Parcels Post—which was just then established—I called upon Metzlers, in Marlborough Street. They said they could do nothing with a comic song, but if I had a sentimental song they might.

"I have a sentimental song," I replied, airily, though I hadn't.

"What is the name of it?"

The name? This was a poser, but I took the first that came into my head, and said, "Lingering Fancies."

"If the song is as good as the title we'll take it. Bring it in to-morrow."

I wrote the first verse in the train going home to Richmond, then cycled over to Kingston to a musical friend,* who set the first verse to music while I wrote the second and third, when I pedalled back home with the completed song in my pocket. Next day it was accepted, and so much approved of that it was published in three keys.

Our payment was to be by royalty, or a share of the profits, I forget which; but this I do remember—

* The late Frederick Rivenhall.

that we never received a farthing, which in the after-light of retrospect does not seem to be the treatment a wealthy firm should accord struggling talent.

The next song bore the ungrammatical title "Thee," because "To Thee," "Of Thee," etc., were appropriated. This we sent to Mr Santley, who replied that when a song specially delighted him he liked to keep it by him and study it. He afterwards agreed to sing it. With our previous experience, we thought we should avoid publishers, and publish ourselves.

Santley sang the song at the Albert Hall and other places, but not with sufficient frequency to please my partner, who wrote him a discourteous letter. This was both foolish and unfair to me, who had a joint-interest in the song, which, of course, Santley ceased to sing. Cramer's, of Regent Street, took the song on royalty, and when the composer died gave me a good sum for the copyright, which I sent to the widow, who was left very badly off.

I attempted to publish no more till Albert Chevalier urged me to submit my songs to Reynolds & Co., who had done so well for his. Following his advice, I arranged for Mr Reynolds to come one Saturday night to the Savage Club and hear me sing them—an arrangement which a joke of Odell's nearly ruined, but you shall judge.

To prevent being called upon before Mr Reynolds arrived, I did not go into the "Smoker," telling Odell that I must wait till a publisher came. It appears that he preceded his recitation by saying, "I am not like Ganthonius; I don't require a publisher before I do anything." In consequence, when I entered the room with Mr Reynolds a babble of voices arose—"Here comes the publisher"—which my look of annoyance soon checked.

The Savages, of course, thought that the whole

story about the publisher was humorous mythology. Fortunately Mr Reynolds noticed nothing in the hub-bub which follows the opening of the doors after a turn. I sang a couple of songs, which led to the publication of a long list of them; all have a good sale, "Sambo's Serenade" and "The Twilight" being the most popular.

I wrote with Edward Jones some humorous songs for ladies—songs for ladies who are too matured for "Clasp me to thy arms, love," "I miss the tickle of thy blonde moustache," etc.—humorous songs which would allow a lady who, though no longer in her first youth, had a voice and musical ability, to amuse her friends; but there are evidently no ladies over nineteen alive, for not a single copy of these songs has been sold.



How I Became a Ventriloquist.

MOST people imagine that the ventriloquist is "born and not made," and though my father felt proud when I showed evidences of these powers, my mother, I think, felt a little uneasy at having given birth to a ventriloquist without being aware of it, until my work on the subject calmed her.

Imitating instruments gave me the idea that I could master voice-throwing, but how I discovered a teacher I do not remember. I think it was in the pages of the *Era* among advertisements of young snakes, Wapiti deer, a calf with five legs, a living carriage, fat women, and living skeletons, but when found, my instructor's ways were as mysterious as his art. He wrote from Hoxton, lived at Wandsworth, and gave lessons in Battersea, at which last address I was requested to call, and found that my instructor was also a tobacconist.

It was a peculiar kind of tobacconist's, for the stock-in-trade, consisting of cigars, pipes, and cigarette boxes, etc., was barely discernible through a thick covering of dust. The corpses of flies that had disported themselves in the shop window during the previous summer lay scattered amongst the long and short clays.

I should have passed the shop had not the most awful sounds of animals proceeding from it arrested my attention. A woman who had left her mangling to see whether the boy was coming with the beer asked me if I was looking for Mr Muggins. I replied, "No, for Professor Serino." "That is Muggins; it's the ventriloquist you want; he's in there right enough." I thanked her and tried to enter the tobacconist's, but the door would not open. I rang the bell, with the result that a card with a girl upon it in tights, and smoking a cigarette, was moved on one side, a face appeared, I was inspected and the door unbolted. When I was admitted it was as securely fastened again.

In the tobacconist's shop there were all sorts and conditions of ventriloquial figures—China and France were represented and South Africa—some sitting, some standing, but all smelling very strongly of varnish.

There are a lot of clever men entertaining the public who only lack education to do well. This will be different in years to come when the anomalies of which I write, like Dickens' allusions to arrest for debt, will be things of the past. They were still existent, however, when I took lessons in ventriloquism.

The "Professor" had whiskers, a big forehead, a clerical appearance, and a nervous, disjointed, short, paragraphic kind of speech, probably caught from his ventriloquial figures.

"This is a horder from a customer, Squowlerini, an old pupil of mine—now on the continent of France—does immense! Watch me! If I stroke it, the tail goes up, and it miaous. They tells me—tell me—that a French cat miaous just like ours. A good thing for pros.! Why we all wants a different language I don't know. English gives me enough trouble to speak correct—correctly."

"A universal Volapuk would be a convenience," I remarked, meditatively, but the "Professor" looked at me as though I had addressed him in Greek.

"Chinese is like cats," he continued, "they don't have no particular langwidge—leastways, none what nobody can't understand, so we makes 'em talk English, which is easier for all parties."

Our conversation was here interrupted by a violent shaking of the door from a customer in search of the fragrant weed.

"Can't attend to you," shouted the "Professor."

"Only 'arf an ounce of shag, Guv'nor," entreated the man outside.

"No."

"Just this once, Guv'nor, and I won't bother you again, so 'elp me bob."

"No, I've got a pupil," replied the relentless "Professor."

"Then go an' drown 'im, and yerself too," shouted the man, and left.

"These people comin' for tobacco is a perfect noosance," remarked the "Professor" in an injured tone.

"But surely you cannot blame them for coming to a tobacconist's for tobacco?" I argued.

"No, that's all right in a general way, but I've taken this shop for a debt, and it interrupts me in my business."

After-experience and knowledge explain many things in life that we do not understand at the time, and I can see now how admirably fitted this "shop" was for the exhibition of ventriloquism or conjuring tricks, being entirely of wood, which is good for sound; the counter, where a "servante" could easily be arranged, was a natural conjuror's table.

The "Professor," whose father, by the way, was a ventriloquist before, and whose daughter was a ventriloquist after, him, had a method of teaching—very crude, certainly—but it was *a method*, and it was upon this I formulated the rules by which this art could be acquired. It took me about three years to work out and submit them to the public as I have done in "Practical Ventriloquism."

Ventriloquism is oral painting in which the voice is made to appear distant or near by the exercise of an art, though it is the same distance from the auditor as the distance or foreground of a picture actually is from the person looking at it.

When I first learnt ventriloquism I looked forward to the fun I should have after mastering it, but now I never think of using it unless I am obliged to professionally. Of course, in my case it would savour too much of "shop" if I tried to pose as a modern "Valentine Vox."

I was entertaining at Raglan Castle, the Duke of Beaufort having recommended me. In giving some experiments in the open air, I called up to an ivy-covered tower, and said, "What are you doing up there?" when I was saved the trouble of any ventriloquial effort in reply to my own question by hearing a boy's voice come out of the ivy, which said, in an accent of fear, "I ain't doing naught. I climbed 'ere to see folk and 'ear band play." This brought me a spontaneous round of applause, so I risked it,

and said, "Well, you can stay there, but don't let anybody see you, or you will be taken to Cardiff and put in prison." This threat prevented my little swindle from being discovered, for the lad never showed himself, and this marvellous exposition of voice-throwing was accepted with my other illustrations. I was pronounced a "champion."

I gave some ventriloquism at the Democratic Club in Chancery Lane, where the window behind was above my head as I stood on the platform. An iron grating, level with the footpath, allowed the light to come through the window in the day time, and at night allowed two small boys to obtain a good view of our proceedings by lying on their stomachs on the pavement and looking into the room. The stage and room being lighted, I could not see them, though they could see me. I seized on this window as offering a good assistance to my experiments, as it is advisable to make it possible that a person can be where you indicate, or the eyes of your auditors contradict your phonetic effects. I had hardly said that I would imitate someone outside the window, and turned to do so, when the boys shouted, "Oh, what a duffin' entertainment!" knocked upon the window, and ran down the street, all of which, including the knock on the window and the retreating footsteps, were attributed to my ventriloquial powers, the audience saying that they had never heard anything like it.

In remote country places a belief in the supernatural still exists, and it is a bit awkward sometimes; for, after I had made a man's voice come out of a cupboard at the inn at Raglan, the servant girl would not open the door of it on any consideration.

A French ambassador was the most sceptical man I ever met. The French are not good ventriloquists,

which may explain it. He insisted that I had someone outside the window, but this time I had not. I convinced him by bringing a voice out of his stomach, when the serious expression of his face made everybody roar with laughter, until he saw the absurdity of doubting, and joined in with the rest.

Mrs Stannard ("John Strange Winter") said to me after some voice-throwing, "I know, of course, that there is no one there; but yet I felt convinced that there was." Her imagination had created the man I orally suggested.

The difficulty—the test of good ventriloquism—is for the artiste to get his voice clearly away from himself, which, in a room with people near you, is very difficult. When children go and look behind the curtain I have used, I accept the action as a compliment.

I remember a clergyman walking up quietly to a cupboard after I had finished and looking into it, and then bursting out laughing to find it full—not of confederates, but household odds and ends.

How I Became a Conjuror.

IN acquiring the art of conjuring I was especially fortunate in having a friend in "Professor Hoffman," whose works on magic are world-famed. As conjuring requires a large palm and ventriloquism a large palate, I found (having both) that by practice I acquired sleight of hand even more readily than I had sleight of throat. Sleight of hand is to conjuring what unaided ventriloquism is to figure working—the art in its most difficult form. It is mechanical conjuring and the employment of automata which make conjurors and ventriloquists so apparently prolific, the

exponents of these arts—especially ventriloquism—being as rare as ever.

Half the difficulty is to obtain the power of addressing and putting an audience at ease: this I had no longer to learn.

I have been surprised at the foolish letters I often receive from men who should know better. A West-End doctor, having seen me at the Savage Club, wrote to engage me for a children's party. A little later he wrote cancelling the engagement, on the ground that though I could of course entertain an adult audience, it would be absurd for me to attempt to amuse children. I wonder what he would think if I wrote to him saying that though he could cure adults it would be absurd for him to attempt to cure children. There is absolutely no difference.

Having no family alive I rather delight in making children happy, generally doing so as "Santa Claus" in costume, and I have found that the old gentleman, with his flowing white beard and hair and snow-flecked gaberdine with a genius for conjuring, is more liked than the ordinary man of mystery.

To excel in conjuring one must be very fond of it, and I am afraid that I am not, though it is the safest form of entertainment to attempt, for everybody loves a little hanky-panky.

I gave sleight of hand at the Egyptian Hall, which is the Mecca of conjurors.

Before East-End audiences or poor children I have found that if you produce eatables and drinkables in abundance, they will not subject your legerdemain to hypercriticism.

How I Became a Lightning Cartoonist.

I HAVE always been very fond of painting, and Maclise's expressions, which I elaborated, gave me the idea of a novel form of sketching entertainment. I added drawing simultaneously with both hands, changing figures into faces and goblets into people kissing. By arranging these in amusing sequence and introducing each item with humorous matter and setting the whole to appropriate music, I became possessed of a "show" which took me all over Great Britain, half round Europe, and through South Africa

I first gave this at the Richmond Theatre, when I felt so ashamed of its simplicity that at the last moment I was going to substitute another item, but the theatre being packed, my wife, who was accommodated at the wings, and, happening to be near me, urged me to do the sketching. The result was entire success. I next tried it at the Opera Comique, and again at the Palace Theatre, where it was engaged and re-engaged; but it would be even more successful there now, with a suitable audience, instead of empty chairs, which are so irresponsible.

At a later period I was allowed—with many gloomy prognostications—to submit it at the Alhambra as an "extra turn," and except in novels where the heroine plays Juliet for the first time without any previous training whatsoever, the genuine applause my sketches provoked has not been surpassed in any theatre. When I was looking after my easels the stage manager came and told me they wanted me before the curtain. I shall never forget the applause which came like the roar of the sea from the front when the curtain was drawn aside to



"Black Art"—Double-handed Drawing. As given at the Alhambra,
Palace Theatre, etc. etc.



let me go on and bow. Before I reached my dressing-room Mr Moul caught me up and engaged me for a month at once, and gave me another contract for a second appearance a little later when they could squeeze me in.

I had the lion turn each evening, my work taking, as it was an intellectual entertainment among so much which was purely physical—at least, that is how I analytically diagnosed its success.

The music was specially orchestrated for the magnificent band at the Alhambra, and was an entertainment in itself. They would finish as my crayon left the paper, as though I had a sympathetic pianoforte accompanist instead of a large orchestra; and this, reader, is how I became a "lightning cartoonist."



How I Became a Nellie Gantbony in Bifurcated Garments.

My sister is always referred to as "Grossmith in petticoats." I have, therefore, for the sake of originality, adopted the above title. When we gave our little pieces people said, "You should have a 'musical sketch' at the piano."

I wrote to Eric Lewis, who had just obtained an engagement at the Savoy Theatre, and, knowing no one else suitable, I knocked one up myself. It was a good thing for Lewis, myself, and my sister that he couldn't join us, as I should never have, perhaps, thought of advising her to give "musical sketches" when we had to break up, and Fanny Wentworth also owes her success to the fact of my sister taking up my idea. I met Miss Wentworth at dinner somewhere, and she told me that she was weary of trying

for engagements, that she had tried every manager for years. I gave her every encouragement, and she paid me a visit, when we discussed the matter, and she soon after blossomed out as another "Grossmith in petticoats."

The Egyptian Hall.

ONE evening, in the course of my private engagements, I found myself at Nevil House, the private residence of Mr Maskelyne, at Battersea Park. When the sorcerer came home from the nightly practice of his weird and inscrutable art he requested that I should do something more, which I thought strange at the time, as I supposed he would have had quite enough entertaining for one day at the Egyptian Hall. He paid great attention to what I did—Maskelyne, *père et fils*, have a very charming way of receiving anything submitted for their approval—and as I finished, led the applause.

When I left he accompanied me to the door, and on the steps of his house asked me if I would like to join him at the "Hall?" I thought that I would, so we arranged a lunch together, discussed what I should do, settled it, and I went home with a contract in my pocket.

I stayed at the hall for a year or so and got along pleasantly with everybody, and there was no trouble about money, for Maskelyne paid us all himself with the punctuality of a well-regulated chronometer.

Mr Cooke is the mysterious partner. Some think "as there ain't such a person," others will tell you that he is dead, but you may accept the fact from me that he is alive, for I met him recently and he promised to give me a few dozen currant bushes. If he has anything to do with them they are sure to bear good fruit.

Many will remember Cooke's countryman who visits the quack doctor and has his head cut off to cure a "koind o' a buzzin'." What a capital piece of character acting it was! He always alludes to the manner he and Maskelyne worked that trick, and the absolute confidence he always felt when doing it with him. No doubt his partner would reciprocate this statement. Their confidence is mutual. I know from acting for so many years with my sister that I never thought that I was acting, or gave the matter of remembering the words, or that I should not get my cues, a thought, and so perhaps, even in a greater degree, is this feeling valuable with a trick where the co-operation and sympathy must be absolute.

One night in the "box trick," in which Cooke is rammed into a box, the lid when slammed down jammed his ear and held him. The pain, he told me, was so great that he fainted. When he regained consciousness he managed to let Maskelyne know what had happened, as he raised the lid on some pretence and again closed it after a brief inquiry. Cooke concluded the trick, the audience laughing and applauding in complete ignorance of the accident, and the act—quiet act—of heroism which had been performed in obscurity to prevent their pleasure being marred and to allow the entertainment to proceed without interruption.

Cooke never forgets voices, and very seldom faces. One night a man came up on the stage from the audience and took a seat.

"I know that man," he said to his partner. "Red necktie, striped trousers, gold-mounted cane."

"Who is he?"

"Paper hanger—did up my house at Cheltenham."

"Name?"

"Pelly—went to Australia."

"Good."

It then rested for either to use their discovery as opportunity offered.

To Cooke's delight the man said, "Perhaps you think I have been up here before?"

"How could you?" replied Cooke. "*You have only just returned from Australia.*"

This caused the man to look so alarmed that the audience laughed. He had been mystified to a state of nervousness by what had been going on previously, but he plucked up courage and said—

"Perhaps, as you are so smart, you can tell me my name?"

"Your name is Pelly," replied Maskelyne, without a moment's hesitation.

The man's face was a study.

"And," continued Cooke, "you originally came from Cheltenham, where you were a paper hanger's apprentice. Do you want to know anything more?"

"No," shouted Pelly. "For Heaven's sake let me get down! I believe you're Old Nick himself."

In the "Dark Seances" they play tricks on those who come on the stage, to suggest to them the presence of spirits. Passing his hand rapidly along their heads in the dark and pulling the hair of his victims, Cooke found in his hand a couple of toupees, and owing to the scurry, bustle, and darkness, he could not tell to which bald top knot the scalps in his hands belonged. He determined to chance it, and rammed them back on the bald pates as he discovered them by the sense of touch, leaving the owners to adjust them themselves. When the lights were turned up at the conclusion of the performance the audience were convulsed with laughter, for Cooke had given the dark wig to the man with the fair hair, and the fair

wig to the man with the black hair ; so that the one had a black crown and fair extremities, and the other a fair crown with black edges. The diplomatic Maskelyne led the two gentlemen off at the wings, where, in the sanctity of his dressing-room, he allowed them to regard themselves in the glass and restore things to their natural order, before returning them by another entrance to the audience, which I had taken charge of while Maskelyne was putting things right and assuring his patrons that *the secrets of the Hall were never revealed.*



Moore and Burgess.

I HAVE often wondered why the present-day minstrels did not imitate the original "Christy" and speak in a negro dialect, in consistency with the character they assumed. When I appeared at St James's Hall I asked about this, and was informed that "Coon" dialect business had gone out of fashion—as though in any imitative art *Nature could go out of fashion!*

I tried a "Musical Sketch" first, and gave a description of a negro party as though I were a darkey with a talent for mimicry who had just returned from one, and I don't suppose that the provincial audience which foregathers at St James's Hall knew what I was driving at—anyway, the sketch went flat. So much for trying to be artistic and true to Nature.

There is often a reason why a thing does not succeed which an artiste does not understand at the time, as he has not been in front and seen the whole programme. In this particular instance the effect of my sketch given at a pianette was discounted by a long programme of singing by the troupe, with full chorus and orchestral accompaniment, which pre-

ceded it, but when I changed my entertainment and followed their vocalism with "patter," the change was a welcome relief, and my success was immediate and absolute.

I had, at Mr Kemble's entreaty, dropped the "Coon" dialect, and gave my "Black Art" and "Funnygraph" in my own voice and manner, and, though the audience applauded, with the black face it was all wrong and meaningless.

The paragraphs issued by the management were injudicious; one I remember was that I had "condescended" to "black up," as though if a man goes in for this kind of life he bothers his head or face whether he "whites up" as a Pierrot or "blacks up" as a nigger, provided the make up is a necessity of the character he portrays.

I was so successful that the management put out boardmen up and down Piccadilly advertising my name as large as life. At the end of the week an artiste who had gone away in a huff, suddenly returned, when the management said that they could not afford to pay both of us, and they must keep him —result, that my name was suddenly withdrawn, which gave the general impression that I had been engaged for my name, and my engagement was a failure. This was accentuated by my name being advertised in the following Sunday's papers after my visit had terminated. The management informed me that advertisements in the Sunday's papers referred to the past week—well, they never did as far as my experience went.

It is remarkable how new an old dress suit looks when you "black up," which improves it as it does the teeth, though the white of a Pierrot makes them look a dirty yellow.

When the original "Christys" came from America

they appeared at a theatre on the Surrey side, which, being too large for them, involved failure. When they tried again it was at a West-End hall, where they soon became the rage, their songs, "Mary Blane," "Nancy Till," "Old Swanee River," being consistent with the character they assumed. The original men were perfect artistes, and I am afraid that "Mary Jane's Top Note," as an Ethiopian serenade, would have had no place in their repertoire, as it did at the St James's Hall; when sung by a slavey in comic opera it made a hit because it was appropriate.

The history of the origin of the title "Moore and Burgess" is amusing:—Moore was the corner man, Burgess the man of business, and when—so the legend has it—the funny man told the man of business that he intended to run the troupe without him, the man of business produced the lease of St James's Hall from a desk, which he had had the precaution to have made out in his own name, and told the funny man that he intended to *keep his minstrels at St James's Hall*, whereupon the well-known title resulted of the Moore and Burgess Minstrels.

Reminiscences of a Pleasure Trip.

THE drawback to a cruise like that which Sir Donald Currie gave his friends in the *Tantallon Castle* to the Baltic is, that when the excitement of the trip is over, and you shake your kindly host by the hand at Fenchurch Street Station, you feel as you drive home that you are nobody. What I mean is, that men no longer stand, as they did in Hamburg, at the street corners and raise their hats. Blue-eyed maidens, with blonde tresses, no longer smile on you and whisper a word of welcome; and clerks do not tear

themselves away from entrancing account books and rush to their office windows to greet you. The newspapers no longer chronicle your doings, and you eat your meals without being surrounded by kings, princes, queens, princesses, and ambassadors, burgomasters, lords, baronets, and other notabilities; and without being daily perplexed by a new foreign language, or as to what dainties you should select from the elaborate *menu* cards presented to you by an obliging steward.

I felt all this as acutely as a dethroned Lord Mayor when I drove from Fenchurch Street, and, yearning for sympathy, said, in the fulness of my heart, to a porter at Waterloo Station who was looking after my traps, "I have just come from the Baltic!"

"'Ave yer?" he replied, possibly thinking I referred to a public-house which supplied lunches. "Well, I'm just agoin' to my dinner."

To begin at the beginning of this wonderful excursion—for the more I think of it the more remarkable does it appear—I should allude to my engagement.

When I received a letter from Sir Donald Currie asking me to call, I presumed that I was wanted at No. 1 Fenchurch Street about my berth on the *Tantallon Castle*, in which vessel my passage was being booked for South Africa. When Mr Martin began talking about Kiel I imagined at first that they were going to put me down in the hold, until it dawned upon me that he was referring to the German bay, to which an aquatic short cut had been made from the Elbe, and to which, on its opening day, all the fleets were going to demonstrate our close adherence to the principles of peace which Christianity enforces. In other words, we were going to show

what preparations, in proportion to its means, each nation had made to blow its contemporary into eternity.

I had not had much experience in opening canals, my last experience of this sort being when, as a schoolboy, I paddled down from Richmond in a canoe to the Brentford Canal. Understanding that any canal whose gates were washed by a tidal river must be opened when admittance was demanded, I shouted for about half an hour, and at last succeeded in obtaining an entrance; and I remember the personal abuse and bad language the lock-keeper used towards me as the lock slowly filled, and I rose in an atmosphere of invective. I reflected that, if this was to be my experience of the opening of the Kiel Canal, the lock-keeper would in all probability curse and swear in German, so that it would not so much matter.

Fenchurch Street Station, though a delightful place to spend a happy day, is not, strictly speaking, a seaport, but this, nevertheless, was our point of embarkation.

The first person I met *en route* was Melton Prior, armed with his sketching implements, which he intended to use for my friend, Sir William Ingram, in the pages of the *Illustrated London News*. Melton's whiskers and costume being the same colour as the luggage, I unfortunately lost him as it accumulated, and had to console myself with the society of a tenor singer who accompanied us, the smoke from whose cigars I enjoyed, without participating in their combustion. At Tilbury the tender took us off to the *Tantallon Castle*, which lay in the Thames a picture of naval architecture.

As we neared the steamer we could see Mr Gladstone and his friends on deck, whereupon a

gentleman near me began waving his umbrella and calling, in an excited manner, to those about him, "There he is! there he is!" I felt inclined to suggest to him that these attentions would be very embarrassing to the venerable politician, when, to my surprise, Mr Gladstone began doing the same thing, pointing at him and saying, "There he is," or "There is Edward." Of course, if Mr Gladstone does this sort of thing, he cannot object to it in others. I think the gentleman on the tender was Lord Rendel, so, on the whole, I am glad that I did not make any suggestions as to what appeared to me to be his want of good manners.

Having called on Jerome previous to starting, and been enrolled with all the usual Howard House ceremonials as temporary foreign correspondent to *To-Day*, I became Ganthony R. Ganthony. I naturally felt myself of unusual importance, but at the same time a little alarmed as to how I should acquit myself in my new character as an imaginative journalist, my editor being an authority on aquatic excursions with a restricted passenger list. We had more than three men in our boat, so my experiences were more elaborate than his. In a footnote to "Celebrities at Sea," under which title my remarks appeared, Jerome said that my sketches had "been secured by pirates." I have wondered since whether he meant literary or nautical pirates. It is the former that have troubled me most.

That I should take "snap shots" was a condition of my employment as a correspondent; but though I had bought a hand camera, and had it with me, I did not use it. I should have liked to have taken a number of "snaps" when on the tender as it sheered off from Tilbury. "Leaving the Dear Old Country" is a fine title for a photograph as large as a postage

stamp ; but, understanding that the hand camera man was a nuisance, I did not like—nay, I did not dare—to remove mine from its case. On the *Tantallon Castle*, however, I saw Mr Gladstone's son-in-law, the Rev. Mr Harry Drew, and others, all armed to the teeth with "Kodaks," taking us. After this I secured nine "snaps" in rapid succession to make up for lost time. As mine was a new kind of camera, Mr Drew questioned me about it, and, after examining it, asked me if I did not think I should obtain better results if I removed the plug which had been inserted by the manufacturers to protect the glass lense. I agreed with him. With the camera as I had it, I might as well have used a soda water bottle and tried to take photos with that.

I shall reprint three *menu* cards, selected haphazard, to which were added all kinds of wines, liqueurs, and cigars, and the reader will see that it was a most fortunate thing for me that I am accustomed to live very simply, as otherwise I should have been inconvenienced by lack of nourishment.

BREAKFAST.

Porridge; fried whiting; smoked haddock; grilled ham and straw potatoes; fried, boiled, and poached eggs; omelette; grilled kidneys on toast; chops and steaks from the grill (to order); curried mutton Madras; straw and mashed potatoes; rolls and toast. Cold—chicken, boiled ham. Tea, coffee, and cocoa.

LUNCHEON.

Kidney soup; grilled fowl and bacon; lamb cutlets with green peas; chops and steaks from the grill (to order); curried eggs; stewed apricots with rice; rice pudding. Cold—Fillets of sole *en aspic*; sardines; roast ribs of beef with horse radish sauce; galantine of turkey truffles with aspic jelly; baron of lamb with mint sauce; partridges; corned round of beef; boiled York ham; assorted salad; *salade à la Française*. Stilton, Cheddar, and Roquefort cheese; pulled-bread; scones; oatcakes, short-bread; dessert; coffee.

DINNER.

Olives, anchovies *a l'huile*; consommé royale; turbot; shrimp sauce devilled whitebait; lamb kidneys epicurienne; fillets of chicken with truffles and mushrooms; roast saddle of mutton with currant jelly; corned brisket of beef with carrots; roast gosling with apple sauce; quails on toast; Malay curry and rice; Lyonnaise and boiled potatoes; green peas *a l'Anglaise*; macedoine of fruit; duchesse loaves; Clarendon pudding; vanilla ices. Stilton, Cheddar, and Roquefort cheese; macaroni *au Gratin*; dessert; coffee.

I have heard it stated constantly that Mr Gladstone has no sense of humour, so I was surprised to find that it was the outbursts of laughter which greeted his remarks and mimicry at the table that drew my attention to his whereabouts. Such reports as these made me a little dubious as to how he would receive my entertainments; but I don't think I ever had a more responsive or sympathetic auditor, nor one who laughed more heartily and unreservedly. I know that I have read in the papers over and over again that Mr Gladstone could not enjoy a joke, which is absolute nonsense. But there are plenty of things said about great men, and even about myself, in the papers that I do not always believe.

It had been decided not to give a concert the first evening, but as we steamed up the North Sea and night set in, time began to hang a little on our hands. As Sir Donald was too remarkable a host to permit this, I was trotted out and put through my paces. When giving my entertainment I was conscious of a gentleman so evidently anxious to assist my performance, that I broke through a rule I have of never looking at my audience, and saw before me a pupil to whom I had been recently giving ventriloquial lessons, viz., the Hon. Sydney Holland, whom I recognised when he doffed his yachting clothes. I asked him afterwards "How he dared to be out on a pleasure

trip, when I had set him a series of ventriloquial scales to practise?" To which he replied, "Come and smoke a cigar on deck."

I hardly expected to see the morning paper on my table at breakfast time. But Sir Donald forgot nothing on that trip; and there it was—*The Tantallon Chronicle*—full of local news, and containing no advertisements. There was no charge for the paper, so I at once became a constant subscriber. In addition to free shaving and hair cutting by the barber, I announced that I would give free lessons in ventriloquism and sleight-of-hand to all subscribers—a thing the editor announced as unheard of, even in these days of advanced journalism.

The first night on retiring I became quite confused as to where my cabin was, as I had got turned round and lost myself aft. I appealed to a steward, who said, "What is your number, sir?"

"Number?" I replied. "I can never remember figures, but if you will direct me to the cabin with the drab cushions, I should be all right if I can get there, because if I put my back against the small piano, and cross the room obliquely, I come to a plate of geraniums, and then my door is the third on the right."

"There is no cabin with drab cushions," remarked the steward. "Then Heaven help me," I said.

Wandering back, wondering where I should get a night's lodging, I crossed the saloon, where I found Sir Donald, his brother, and some other gentlemen seated at a table, sampling a bottle of cold water. I intended to pass them, as I did not wish to admit that I was lost the first night out, when Sir Donald hailed me, and expressed his delight at my entertainment. Being the initial one, this was very gratifying, as it meant my professional success for the whole

trip. He, however, remarked that I did not look as merry as I did when entertaining, which caused me to divulge the fact to him that I was lost, that I had forgotten the number of my cabin and all clue to its locality. This seemed to amuse him greatly, and he comforted me by saying "that if I would tell them a good story right off, he would take me to my cabin himself." The one story was so much relished, that I had some cold water also, and we wound up the night in anecdote and diluted water, after which I obtained the escort to my cabin, which had become still more necessary. The next day I had a chart of the *Tantallon Castle* presented me by Sir Donald, together with the number of my cabin, under a "Castle" flag badge to be worn in my yachting cap, so that the stewards would know where I came from and where to redirect me.

Talking of stewards reminds me of a call I had from the one who waited on me at our table. He said, "Would you mind telling me, sir, the end of that story about the man who left his friend in the Hotel St Joseph's, at Rouen, etc.? I had to go for the champagne just as you was coming to the point." After that, if his duties lost him the end of a story, he always waited on me for its conclusion. The place where I sat, with a lot of clever, genial men, we called the "Poets' Corner," and from the Poets' Corner came the most frequent laughter on the ship during the voyage. The least came from that part of the room where they had a representative from *Punch*, whose contribution to our *Chronicle* was a joke about weighing the anchor and what did it weigh?—a piece of humour that even I had heard before, to say nothing of the stewards.

The first event was the sighting of Heligoland, which is a dismal rock on the "prompt" and a gay

watering place on the "O. P." side. As we passed the *Fürst Bismarck*, its band played "God Save the Queen" in our honour, and we, not having a band laid on for the moment, gave what the song calls, "three 'earty cheers" in return. Then we ported the helm and took the first turning on the right and went up the Elbe. The way crowds of enthusiastic Germans lined the banks and cheered us as we proceeded was a denial of any idea of unfriendliness between these two great English-speaking countries. I include Germany in our English-speaking countries, for they all spoke English as well, if not better, than we did, having more recently left off studying their grammars.

People came out from their *Erdbeeren mit Schlagsahne und kirschen* on to the balconies of their villas, which line the banks, and waved their serviettes to welcome us. The number of sunken vessels we passed on the Elbe received us in silence. When a steamer is run into there and it sinks, it is allowed to remain as a delicate hint to those still floating to be more careful. If they have many more collisions, and don't gather up the fragments, there will be no room to pass.

When half way up the Elbe a deputation boarded us like a lot of smiling pirates, armed with bouquets and umbrellas, and bound us, not with ropes, but to keep the two following days—"Tage" they called them—according to their pre-arranged and printed programmes.

After this we passed a large sailing vessel sunk hull under, next a large steamer cut bang in half, the stern and propeller up in the air, and the bow a little further off. I was just going to smile at the sailing vessel cutting the steamer in half, but Mrs Gladstone said, "It is a very painful sight," so I murmured an acquiescence, looked as sorrowful as was possible under the circumstances, though I afterwards, when

asked the cause, attributed the accidents to lack of Elbe-ow room ; but this was late at night, and with friends whom I knew would offer me no personal violence.

It was a lovely evening when we steamed up the Elbe, the sky reminding me of the sunset effects in the Dutch pictures at the National Gallery, which I had previously thought a little unnatural, as people do when they see in pictures the colouring of the autumn tints of American foliage, or the blue of the Niagara river after it has been coloured by the rock at the foot of the falls.

On arrival at Hamburg, knowing how ocean travel upsets chronology, we all began to set our watches by a large clock face, opposite which we moored, only to discover that we were accepting the depth of the Elbe as the time of day. A perpendicular dial would be better, as the circular dial with figures is universally understood to refer to time.

In the States the first thing they do to cheer you up is to show you a cemetery. In Germany they take you to the waterworks, or, as they persist in calling it, "Wasserwerke." This is where the good people of Hamburg took us at eight o'clock next morning. If ever I have a friend come to see me from Hamburg I shall take him off to Battersea at daybreak, and, after breakfast at Kingston, drag him round our "Wasserwerke" at Surbiton and Sunbury. Though the Hamburgers all speak English, their printing type has not yet mastered our language, so that in the official programme a pleasant little trip down the river appeared rather formidable and complicated. It was referred to thus: "Ab passagierhallen per lauenburger dampfer."

We left the *Tantallon Castle* moored to the "dolphins" off the town, and, in a small steamer, the

aforesaid "dampfer," went, to my surprise, down stream to the waterworks. Up or down didn't matter to me, so I set to work to "snap" the whole river as we puffed along to the music of a brass band composed of gentlemen in tall silk hats.

In addition to the band there were several casks of lager beer, which a German maiden tendered us. The Tantallonians did not come out strong as beer drinkers, but the band in tall hats made up for our shortcomings. Personally I find eight o'clock early to begin beer drinking, unless I start off at four on a cycle trip after breakfasting in the dark on salt bacon.

They are away ahead of us in petroleum motor boats, numbers of which were to be seen darting about the harbour, and which appeared to be a very serviceable sort of flotilla.

A small landing-stage opposite the manager's house marks our destination, at which we disembark, the gentlemen of the orchestra preferring to remain with the casks of lager to sharing with us the delights of inspecting the water. In this respect they acted very much as an English orchestra would have done under the circumstances.

It is due to our British engineers to say that if they are behind hand in the matter of petroleum motors—which, by the way, I remember Kyrle Bellew advocating very strongly at the Savage Club years ago—we are to the front in regard to waterworks, as I perceived that most of the "plant" bore British firms' names, which always pleases me. Hence I argue that I must be patriotic if I do not possess any other good quality. Those who know what a tremendous undertaking it is to supply London with water, and how this business—for it is a business—has advanced by leaps and bounds, will quite understand

the wisdom of the Hamburg people in coming to us and copying our water factories at Battersea, etc. One argumentative German would insist upon it that Battersea was near the ocean. I told him that it was not, but he said, " Bah ! if it vas not vy call it Batter Sea ? "

I was criticising the lines of a smart-looking four-masted sailing vessel to Mr Laeisz, the great Hamburg shipowner, as the vessel passed down the Elbe. He listened to my remarks very good naturedly for some time, and then said had he met me before he thought he might had adopted some of my suggestions, as the vessel was his. My mother told me not to make remarks about people when at a party, but she never told me to keep my mouth shut about ships.

How the sight of a stork on the housetop reminded us of many tales of German and Scandinavian origin. All the party cried out for me to "snap" it. I went up cautiously, and was raising my hat previous to taking its likeness, because photographers are supremely polite, when it doubled up its long legs in a most marvellous way and slid down the other side of the roof, to my discomfiture and the jubilation of the Tantallonians.

It was very pleasant wandering about the grounds on that lovely summer's day inspecting filters, sieves, and machinery for making the Elbe water palatable. In a small tower, which suggested a place of execution, we were cordially invited to drink some Elbe water, which had been experimented upon, but we drank with even greater reserve than was accorded to the lager beer. Many of our party being in Germany "took the waters," some pretended to be judges, but they did not appear to be able to recollect tasting the liquid before. What I sampled was very much like the brand in our cistern, only rather more so.

After—mark you, after and not before—being induced to swallow some of the Elbe “wasser” we were taken to another building and shown through microscopes what remarkably fine and varied specimens of animalculæ the Elbe contained. I understood that this was done to moderate any wild enthusiasm for water, which our recent libations of what was to many of us a new drink, might create.

After that we changed the subject, and partook of wines, spirits, and cigars, etc., though what cigars have to do with waterworks I don’t know, but my inability to reconcile the relevance of these things did not prevent me from enjoying a smoke and a glass of champagne.

When I examined the animalculæ I thought that I had discovered a German sea-serpent, but it turned out to be my English eyelash which I had been examining microscopically, the water having dried up on the glass, to the discomfort of the insects and the temporary postponement of entomological investigation.

Time pressed, and we had to get on to the next item, which in the programme was “Rundfahrt durch den Hafen,” so we left the animalculæ and steamed round about the shipping. The brass band was much appreciated by the wharf labourers, who shouted lustily for music if the musicians showed a too prolonged appreciation of the foaming lager. The band, it will interest musical readers to know, was entirely brass—no reed instruments, as we have here—which they played remarkably well; and we gave them hearty applause, which I think I started, being quickly echoed by the others. We thus put them on their mettle, and they did their best.

Leaving the dampfer we landed in Hamburg, and found forty or fifty very smart pair-horse carriages

with cockade-hatted coachmen in boots and breeches *a l'Anglais*, and, more remarkable still, they all came from one livery stable. In these carriages we were soon clattering through the streets of Hamburg to the Alsterlust, where lunch was awaiting us, and where we all arrived, tired with continual hat raising. I suppose the Prince of Wales becomes accustomed to raising his hat, as a flute player does to holding a flute ; but, if you only play the prince occasionally, it does make your muscles ache.

Hamburg reminds me of Venice when I saw it, only it is not made entirely of wood and painted canvas, and the Hammersmith busses don't pass the doors. There was a good deal of painted canvas, though, on the Alster Lake when we were there in honour of the Emperor, who was calling on his way to open the canal the following week. This included floating islands, with painted rocks and lighthouses, all illuminated by electricity.

Hamburg is a very fine city, and the Alster Lake, with tree-shaded streets, and shops that compare with Regent Street along its banks, are sufficient to account for qualities that make a city interesting and beautiful.

The Alsterlust is a sort of Marlow Hotel, with sailing yachts bringing visitors to lunch. Imagine a lake in Trafalgar Square, and sailing boats bringing up at the Metropole or Morley's landing stage, and you can understand what they have in Hamburg. Half the landing stage was roped off for our party. Mr and Mrs Gladstone joined us here, and after lunch we again had recourse to dampfers, and steamed up the Alster river.

Our relaxation again took an aqueous form, for this time we went to a christening ; and, as there was only one child, there wasn't enough to go round, so most of us stopped in the Alsterdampfboten ; and, as

AUTHOR PORTRAITURE. (CRUISE G.O.M.)



What Mrs Gladstone deplored and the Author laughed at.



Brass Band in Tall Hats.



it came on to pour in torrents, it became Alster damp boating indeed.

No sooner were we back in the *Tantallon Castle* than we had to dress and start off to dine at the Zoological Gardens. Whenever I had hitherto associated zoological gardens with feeding it was in the capacity of a looker on, not as a diner out. Mr Gladstone was the lion of our party, but it seemed hardly the thing to put him in a cage, and feed him through the iron bars. I never believed that they would do this, but I waited the development of events. After all, I did have raw meat at the "Zoo," and cut it up on a wooden platter, but I was spared the indignity of being put in a cage.

In Hamburg banquets they have a speech, and then something to eat, then the next course and another speech, and it entirely depends on the duration of the speakers' remarks whether the viands that follow his oratory are done to a crisp or half cooked. As a rule, the things never suffer by too little cooking. The dinner was kept up from about seven to after midnight, and, I trust, was kept down afterwards; but they mix things a bit. I and some others were able to go out in the gardens and enjoy the band and sit under the trees, then look in and have a course or hear a speech, and go out again as we pleased. The speeches were mostly given in English, and, though a trifle too ornate for after—or rather, between—dinner speeches, they were given with perfect accent and correctness. If ever I give a speech at a zoological gardens in German it will not be found to be too ornate, and the dish after will probably come on the table half cooked.

If I apologised to a young lady when my chair touched hers, or what not, she would answer in

English, and seemed to rejoice at having done so. I shall never forget that night at the Hamburg "Zoo," and how well the band played, and how full of conceit the conductor was. I never saw a man who strutted about so. It would be nice to feel for five minutes as completely satisfied with one's self as that man did the whole evening.

Owing to the downpour the G.O.M. did not go to the Zoological Gardens. He had been to one christening that day, and did not want to take part in another. Much leave taking and health drinking, and in the early hours we all drove back to the *Tantallon Castle*, and so finished what the official programme called "Freitag, der 14 Juni."

Sonnabend I took quietly, and lunched on board with Mr Gladstone, as the *Tantallon Castle* had during the night dropped down the Elbe into a pretty country, leaving the younger ones to "Frühstück bei Jacob's" (*vide* programme); and I found that I lost nothing, as the "frühstück" turned out to be a "frühstück" on a mud bank in their small steamer opposite Jacob's, where, while enjoying the pangs of hunger, those who went "frühstucking" could see on shore the decorated tables of Herr Jacob's hotel groaning under the weight of luxuries, with which they were prodigally encumbered, while idle waiters stood ready to serve the collation, to which, owing to their stranded condition, the famished visitors could not do justice. They on the small steamer discovered that, though the tide waits for no man, it compels both men and women to wait for it, as on that mud bank they had to remain till it was time to return to the *Tantallon Castle* to dinner. In despair a gentleman gallantly endeavoured to push the steamer off with a new silk umbrella, which to this day remains stuck in the mud bank, an evidence of how brave

men are rewarded, and of the uncertainty of human plans and desires.

The run on the bank to which I have referred reminds me of an excursion I took as a lad in a steamer, which, by a strange lack of good navigation, ran right on to a sand bank. I had drawn the captain's attention to this long before we reached it. At the time we congratulated ourselves on the fact that it was a dead calm, and that, as the tide, after ebbing, would again rise, we should be able to return home in safety. I have wondered since whether this was entirely accident, or whether the knowledge that the whole of the passengers would be obliged to take their meals on board, and the steamer being saved about six hours' coal, had not something to do with this accident; also, whether the run on the mud bank did not allow Jacob's, which is a suspicious though a biblical name, to retain the lunch he had been paid to supply, plus Paddon's silk umbrella.

When the famished "frühstuckers" came home from their mud lark they found the *Tantallon Castle* gay with bunting, as that evening we returned the hospitality we had partaken at the "Zoo" and the "wasserwerke."

We had our food first and speeches afterwards at our banquet, so the *chefs* from the Savoy, where most of them are trained before being engaged on the Castle Liners, were able to do justice to their culinary art. We were all dressed and on deck in good time, looking out for our guests with our glasses, and, long before they arrived, we could see the *Ariadne* steaming down the Elbe, decorated like a bridegroom and filled with all the best looking women and the most important men in Hamburg. The weather was again lovely, and it was a pretty sight to see the crowds of

guests in evening dress leave the small steamer and come aboard that beautiful Castle Liner. What a banquet it was! Every cabin was utilised, and English and German nobility did not disdain second-class accommodation so that our German friends might have the saloon. After the banquet we had speeches, and one by Mr Gladstone "made in Germany," which we cheered as though we were in a police court. On deck the Scotch piper boys then played their bagpipes—a form of melody I have not found my musical studies endear me to—then they danced reels and flings, and I am not sure but that Sir Donald did also. If he refrained it was not from lack of activity, but from a sense of the dignity of his position, for age seems to affect him as little as a white wig would a lively schoolboy. As a matter of fact, he and Mrs Gladstone were as full of animal spirits as the youngest of us. After the dancing, etc., the saloon having been arranged, I gave an entertainment to our German guests, and I might have been amusing an English audience, as far as being understood was concerned, the "Ganthony's Grotesques" and the double-handed drawing rather surprising them.

What cheers we gave them as they disembarked and, in the *Ariadne*, steamed back to Hamburg in the cool of a starry midnight. We turned in tired, having carried through the Hamburg programme. During the hours of slumber we weighed anchor, and, when we came down to breakfast next morning, discovered that we were passing the Elbe gates of the Kiel Canal. Being still shut, we went round Denmark, past the Cattergat and Skaggerack, which I had never heard of since my school days. We went about Europe as one does about London in a hansom. Instead of saying, "Drive to the Savoy

Hotel," Sir Donald would say, "Go to Copenhagen and we will call on the King and Queen."

On Sunday we had lovely weather, as we had had all the voyage, and we continued making record passages, the *Tantallon Castle* being a much larger steamer than those which usually make this trip. The distant church bells reminded us, as we steamed out of the Elbe, that it was Sunday. We had services on board, which the Rev. Harry Drew conducted with a flag-covered desk for a pulpit.

The entrance to Copenhagen is very impressive. Passing the islands of Laeso and Anholt we saw, between Elsinore and Helsingberg, Hamlet's Castle of Kronberg. But the endless horizon of low-lying land scarcely justified Horatio's alarm about the ghost leading Hamlet "to the dreadful summit of the cliff that beetles o'er his base into the sea," which would be as difficult to find as that particular spot in the tropics in which Pinero, in one of his plays, makes a returned officer say, "The twilight lingers."

As the King of Denmark has just had a magnificent free dock built at Copenhagen, and he asked that it should be made known, I refer to it to please him, and also to please those of my yachting friends who are wise enough to visit Copenhagen. The *Tantallon Castle*, which is nearly 6000 tons register, moored alongside the open quay, where the depth of water is about twenty-six feet and the tide is stationary, being only affected by the wind, when it rises and falls a few inches.

The Museum of Antiquities contains the most interesting collection of curious furniture I have ever seen. This and the Thorwaldsen Museum we had specially opened for us on the Tuesday and Wednesday.

One day, returning to lunch, we saw a lot of red-coated coachmen driving back from the steamer, and,

though we could not speak Danish, we understood that the King was on board ; and, being late, we hurried into our frock coats and then into the saloon. The gentleman who sat next me was formerly the British Consul at Copenhagen, and was known to the Royal party. When they entered, one of the princes took my seat, so as to be near him, and I had no alternative but to accept one amongst our princely visitors or go without lunch. For a person of my description I was in very respectable company—the King (who looks like an English gentleman), and Queen of Denmark (one of the gentlest, sweetest ladies it would be possible to meet), Prince Hans (the King's brother), the Crown Prince and Princess, the Prince and Princess Waldemar, the British Ambassador and the Danish Prime Minister, Sir Cuthbert Quilter, Sir Baden Powell (who took notes of sketching entertainment on his shirt cuff at Kiel), and many others.

After lunch we had speeches from Sir Donald, whose oratory always delights me, except when he prefaces my entertainments, and, to my discomfiture, leaves me to make my opening address in some other manner. But I forgive him, for I never had a kinder host in all my experience. Then Mr Gladstone made a magnificent speech. Men who had listened to him for twenty years in the House said that he never did anything finer. He had a splendid opportunity, of which he took every advantage. We had in that saloon of the *Tantallon Castle* at Copenhagen the mother and father of our Princess of Wales, a gathering of political and other notabilities ; and, what was more, they were mostly British subjects away in a foreign land. The Grand Old Man looked one, as he alluded to the affection of our people for the daughter of our honoured

guests; and so eloquently was this theme pressed home that the whole company was visibly affected. The King had more difficulty in replying from excess of emotion than from lack of language, though he put this forward as a plea for his shortcomings, which were not observable. He said, "I have a difficulty in replying in English"—to which I added in one of my articles, "and to *such* English." Mr Gladstone's oratory would have warranted the King in saying this, and he would probably have said it had he thought of it.

I happened to be walking by the side of the Queen of Denmark when her dress touched a violin bow belonging to one of the stewards in the band. The bow fell on the deck. She not only apologised, but stopped and pointedly inquired of the man whether she had done any injury? It is no wonder that a nation is so courteous when their Queen sets them such an example.

When our Royal guests had departed, the multitude that came down to see the King and Queen and the *Tantallon Castle* were admitted on board, and thousands spent the afternoon rambling over the ship and trying to explain to us how they admired it. They were supplied with tea, for Sir Donald has nothing to do with half-hearted hospitality. Where the dainties all came from on board that steamer surprised me almost as much as where they went to. They estimated the number of visitors who came on board (exclusive of Royalty and myself) to be about 30,000. This was ascertained by the depth the steamer sank in the water.

We had a lot of fun in Copenhagen, where the stores are called Lagers, and in many cases there is no means of knowing from the outside what they sell; though the term "lager" suggests liquid refresh-

ment. Meeting Melton Prior, and not having spoken English for at least ten minutes, I stopped him, when he informed me that he was thirsty—a not unusual occurrence with any of us, owing, I believe, to the salt air unavoidable on a sea trip. Over a shop near us was written, "Ringgriber-Symaskine Lager," which looked like something to drink, as further commercial literature underneath said, "1 Klasses Symaskine fra 35 Kroners." It seemed a good price for one glass of symaskiner, but we thought we would try one between us, as it looks so foolish not to know the customs and drinks of a country you visit. We went into the store and ordered a glass of symaskiner, and they brought us a sewing machine!—"1 Klasses" meaning 1st class, not "one glass," as we supposed, and "Ringgriber-Symaskine Lager" stood for sewing machine stores. We left thirstier than ever, grieving to think how strangers are taken in and deceived in a foreign land.

Why is it that directly a vessel reaches port the first thing the passengers do, who have been eating to repletion during the voyage, is to hurry off to the nearest restaurant and order whatever meal the time of day warrants them in eating? I had hardly begun to enjoy the delights of abstinence when I met a party from the ship who insisted on my going with them to "I Alster-Boulevard-Pavillonen I Tivoii" to have something "a la carte og Frokostretter forefindes," as far as I can remember, after a lapse of two years. After feasting, we went to the Tivoli, which is next door, and which is claimed, and I should say rightly so, to be the most famous of all Tivolis. The patrons of amusement on the Continent want plenty for their money, and they get it at the Copenhagen Tivoli, as the charge for some fifteen entertainments, beginning at four o'clock and continuing until about

eleven o'clock, is ten ore (about ninepence), and when this includes "Glimrende Illumination af Parkens Alleer, Portaler Bazaren, and Udstillingsbygningen og Labyrinten," and other things, no reasonable person can complain that the management is not liberality itself.

What they promise on the programme, whether pictorial or otherwise, they are bound to give you on the Continent, which rule, by the way, would curb the wild imagination of some of our circus poster artists, and though they might promise me anything in the Danish language without my being conscious of being swindled, I saw enough for ninepence to allay all doubts on the subject of treachery as regards the fulfilment of their picture bill promises.

We saw part of a music hall performance in a building about twice the size of our Strand Tivoli, where an English troupe gave us what the directors called "Luftgymnastikerselskabet." Is there a music hall director in London who could find a name like that for an artiste's turn? I think not. From the music hall we wandered through the woods to a lake on which floated a galleon from whose 'tween decks came the sounds of music from a guitar and mandoline. They were very sweet heard across the water. While listening to the music on this floating vessel you could have refreshment on board, but as this was no novelty to sea dogs such as we were, we only looked at the others eating from our position on shore. Attracted by lights which we saw through the trees, we wandered on and came to a large concert saloon even more crowded, if that were possible, than the music hall. It was an orchestral concert pure and simple, and men with their wives and families sat together and enjoyed the evening. As it is perhaps expected of me to compare foreign entertainments with those at home, I do not like to leave this concert without

referring to the quality of the music this working-class audience enjoyed.

We heard a piece by Grieg, for strings, a selection for the entire orchestra from Wagner's "Lohengrin," also from Moszkowsky, Gounod, and Weber. These people who listened to such high-class music could have gone to the music hall for their ninepence instead had they liked, but they did not, and this shows as clearly as anything that the public are not all of one mind, and that the variety stage does not prove itself the embodiment of all attractions to the amusement-loving public if they are offered their choice of something more refined, as they were at the Tivoli, Copenhagen. Having sampled this concert we again wandered through the woods of the grounds, which seemed without end, and came across an open-air theatre which was called the "Peacock," because a huge bird, supposed to be of that breed, spread its tail across the proscenium and constituted the act drop. The show closed when it opened its tail, as, when it did this and put away its head as though for slumber, the audience knew that all was over for the night, and, taking the bird's hint, went to roost themselves.

After the Peacock Theatre we found yet another concert hall in full operation, at which we listened to what they called "Udtog af Op Mikadoen," by Arthur Sullivan, which reminded me of "The Mikado." They had also "The British Patrol Marche," by N. O. Body, which, I fancy, was a joke of the conductor's, whose name, "George Lumbye," had an English flavour, as had his programme, which included the works of Balfe, Wallace, Godfrey, and the conductor himself.

The matter proffered at the open-air Peacock Theatre was of the grotesque pantomimic order;

that at the music hall was slipshod and halting in comparison with the prompt way in which turns are disposed of at our best halls. The lack of attention to what is being done on the stage is far greater in Copenhagen than it is even with us, and that is bad enough. Women with their children crying, the entrance of a party of young Danes who are immediately saluted with "Hoch! hoch!" by their friends, who rise to great them, the clatter of beer glasses, etc., all interrupt the performance and make those on the stage often take more interest in what is going on in the auditorium than in what they are doing to entertain the audience. Entertainment given under such conditions becomes dreary and uninteresting to those who wish to enjoy an exhibition of talent.

I would not think of performing at a Copenhagen music hall, though I would at a London one, for the sake of setting the taste as far as lay in my power, for something better. These gardens—this prodigality of amusement at a low charge—has been going on for a long time abroad, though we are only now adopting it at home at Earl's Court, etc., and, in a perhaps greater degree, at our northern seaports. Having had for our ten ore a good ninepenny worth of dissipation, we took flys and returned rather late to the *Tantallon Castle*.

The shops in Copenhagen can hardly be called wholesale, as they are divided at about the height of my watch-chain horizontally, which plan I rather liked, as it was often possible to feast my eyes on beautiful art draperies in the top shop while the rising fumes from the lower one entranced my nostrils with an odour of smoked fish being fried, or the boiling fragrance of the blushing shrimp.

When a cab is standing at ease the cabby undoes the traces of the horse, which often results in there

being no traces of the horse when he returns from the public-house, to which he goes just as I have seen cabmen do in London. The horses there are not allowed to swing a bag of fodder up in the air every time they want a mouthful of food as with us, to the damage of any new silk hats that are passing, but are made to eat off tables which the cabby carries for the purpose.

Our visit to a water circus terminated in a manner that is more amusing to read of afterwards than it was to experience at the time of actual occurrence. At an aquatic circus—at all events in Denmark—you sit rather below the arena, and enjoy the performance by looking over the ring partition. This, as we had no option of doing anything else, we did. The performance commenced by the rapid entrance of a lot of water down a chute to appropriate strains of music from the band. This was followed by a swan, which walked until the increasing flood knocked it over, when it took to swimming, and twisting round and round with the eddies, arrived, looking very much astonished, in the centre of the rapidly-filling ring. This was followed by the entrance of a young lady attired as a water nymph, who floated, with much applause and a good deal of splashing, into the arena; and just as matters were getting interesting the circus burst, and the water, which nearly drowned us, stranded the nymph, who scrambling to her feet, told us not to be alarmed; but as she spoke in Danish her remarks were not so reassuring to the English contingent as they would have been had they been understood. The girl and the swan, I think, felt more awkward without the water than we did with it, which is saying a good deal. As the water went out by the extra exits in case of fire, and wandered about the streets of Copenhagen, we picked our way on the

arms of the stall seats to the doors, where we arrived, not, as a rule, without occasional immersions. There was a natural inquiry on board as to what kind of an entertainment we had come back from to be soaked to the knees? We didn't tell them; next time I sample a circus I shall take it, like my wine—dry.

A good many of us had our cycles on board, which enabled us to see more of the place than we could have done otherwise. At Bernstoff—where the King resides—the Royal Family were very kind in showing us the grounds. The first English that I saw "here in Denmark" was a bill about "Charley's Aunt," which was that night being played at the "Folke Theatre," the first home-like language being the name of my old friend, Brandon Thomas, as author; the second over a clockmaker's, was "Time is money."

The chief item in our outing, namely, the opening of the Kiel Canal, was what, if my memory serves me, our Oliver Cromwell tried; as did Wallenstein years before, but circumstances compelled these gentlemen to leave the consummation of the idea to the present Emperor of Germany.

About mid-day on the following Wednesday we cast anchor in Kiel bay, at the spot buoyed for our reception, where we had a splendid view of the warships, which had all taken up their positions before we arrived.

In the afternoon, at Sir William Ingram's invitation, I accompanied a select party up the bay in his steam yacht, the *Osprey*, which had come over independently of us, and was at hand very opportunely, as the tugs ordered had not put in an appearance. We had a lovely run among the war vessels of the various nations there assembled. We were passing the *Re Umberto*, the Italian man-of-war, when some marines put out from her in a steam cutter. The man

at the tiller was drinking a bottle of chianti, and in his anxiety to cover his act of libation from the officers on board his ship, paid but little attention to where the cutter was going, and in consequence ran into the *Osprey* broadside on ; but the *Osprey*, being a stout, sea-going boat, didn't mind it in the least, and gave the Italian the worst of the encounter. As the cutter struck us just where Mr Gladstone was sitting, it was a good thing that he was grown up, or he might have had his hand hanging overboard, as children do. When the danger was over everybody wanted to do something, but the Grand Old Man scarcely took his attention off the vessels we were passing. The cutter was promptly recalled to the *Re Umberto* by the officers, who, no doubt, recognised me through the glasses they levelled at us, if they failed to notice Mr Gladstone. There was a good deal of banging of guns, and, as though to return fire, we had a tremendous thunderstorm in the evening, which for noise more than equalled anything made by the vessels, and did, I believe, much more damage to the surrounding country than all their blank cartridges put together.

The following day I found myself alone on deck with the G.O.M., he preferring to read, and I wishing to get a water colour sketch for my study, as the black and white pictures in the illustrated papers, though life-like, give no idea of the varied colours of the vessels and the effect of the bunting they displayed.

It was "accession" day, or, as one gentleman from South Africa called it, "ascension" day, which was not exactly the same thing. The sight-seers having gone off in small steamers to look at what they had seen the day before, with variations, I surrounded myself with iced drinks, cigars, and my sketching paraphernalia, and then, after a sip and a puff at my

cigar, ensconced myself on a deck chair under the awning and settled down to work. Mr Gladstone's preparations for work were completed when he removed his coat. In his shirt sleeves he soon became engrossed in a large tome, I believe of Greek. It was a piping hot morning, remember, and we, like the boy, "stood on the burning deck whence all but he had fled," though we sat under the awning.

As I had about completed my sketch, the fleet began firing a salute to Her Majesty, commencing with a few bangs that would have broken a Southsea shop window, whereupon Mr Gladstone looked up from his book and said, "What a dreadful noise!" It was not a long speech for him, but mine was still shorter, for I replied, "It is," as it was useless to argue the point. All this banging sent columns of smoke along the water, which I dashed into my sketch with body colour, and it was as well I did not delay doing so, as a little later the bay became so thick with smoke that I could see nothing, whilst the banging made the pursuit of painting or any peaceful occupation impossible.

Amid the tumult I heard a band playing under our stern, and happening to look over the taffrail I saw the *Ariadne* filled with our friends from Hamburg, just as Mr Merrilees ran up on deck and, anticipating me, told Mr Gladstone, when we three gave them the warmest greetings our small numbers permitted.

We had visits from the British naval officers, and a very fine set of fellows they were—courteous and deferential to everyone. They did not appear to consider that we had much to learn from other nations in naval matters, and I expect their modestly expressed views are not far from the truth. Our ships seemed distinguished from the others by a duck-like familiarity with the water; they sat upon it as though

they were perfectly at home. The Italian vessels ran us close in appearance, and these, I understood from a chat I had with Lord Rendel, were designed by his brother.

The American vessels looked very showy with their gaily painted shields in the bow and white sides, but they had to be tinkered up before they left the bay, and their mongrel crews of all nationalities had the reputation of being an undisciplined, badly-managed set. This is the conclusion to which I was forced to come from the unbiassed testimony of those who visited them and knew what they were talking about.

I suppose all this booming of cannon was necessary, but it does seem to me that the money the noise costs might be more wisely expended.

Before going home we went to Sweden. The wild, forbidding character of the coast impressed me very much as we approached it, with its lighthouses that hung on the rocks like larks' cages on the wall of a country cottage.

We steamed up the river Gotha, but had to wait some miles down for the tender which was to take us up to Gottenburg. She was soon seen bearing down upon us, so well was everything arranged on that trip. At Gottenburg we found lunch awaiting us at the Grand Hotel—a Swedish feast that reminded me of the Scandinavian Club in the Strand, where Nordenfeldt, the inventor, was the ruling spirit, and genial Danes and Swedes made such delightful hosts. We helped ourselves at a side table, a plan that certainly saves waiters, and ate all sorts of things which even the shorthand writer, who gave a brief summary of the trip, does not chronicle; but then he didn't know the names of the professional talent which delighted the company on board for two

weeks, so his ignorance of the eatables is comprehensible. He recognised the Swedish ale, though, but affected not to recognise the oatcake, which, like the merry people who made the fun, was left without record in his calendar of fame.

Mr Gladstone, though a Scotchman, couldn't finish his oatmeal cake, so I put it in my pocket as a souvenir. I suggested that he should write on it that it was a piece of oatcake which he didn't eat at the Grand Hotel, Gottenburg; but he argued that, so long as I kept possession of the delicacy, any statement from him that he hadn't eaten it was superfluous—a fairly witty reply from a gentleman who is supposed to be without any sense of humour.

By special train we went to see the Trollhätten Rapids, which we reached in about two hours, driving from the station in ramshackle traps, the drivers of which seem to pass each other without any regard to rule—first one side, and then the other, which made it not a desirable place for lady cyclists if nervous. The rapids, though more compressed, reminded me of the Niagara before it drops over the horse shoe, and, changing colour, runs down to Lake Ontario. The water power was used for match making, though it struck me that it might be also employed to work an electric railway from Gottenburg, and supply motive power to the steamers which, above the rapids, go on to Stockholm.

I won't say that we all come from monkeys, but I will say that the Scotch came from Sweden. The bare-footed lassie who took toll at the bridge, with her sandy hair and freckles, was Scotch; and her talk was Scotch, or second cousin to it. The cleanly-kept cottages were the same that I have seen when cycling from Dundee to the Ochill Hills. The oatmeal

cakes, smoked fish, etc., all seemed to me to indicate the predecessors of the Northern Britisher.

I made some purchases with Sir Cuthbert Quilter at Trollhätten, which, though only a village, has more politeness in one shop than you will receive from all the post offices in England where ladies deal out stamps.

I saw plenty of English names on the iron girders, etc., of the new docks at Gottenburg, which, as Pepys would have said in his "Diary," "pleased me hugely." Our return was illuminated by one of the finest sunsets I ever remember. Before midnight we had doubled the Skaw, and were ploughing the ocean homewards across the North Sea.

Arrived off Tilbury we received the papers on board, and learnt that Parliament had dissolved or done something interesting, which was a sort of quick act drop on a very remarkable cruise.

Mr and Mrs Gladstone were the first to leave the steamer, and, as they reached the landing-stage at Tilbury, a fat, vulgar-looking woman, decorated with a much beflowered hat and short gloves and gay cloak, walked forward, made a bob of a curtsey to Mr Gladstone, and shook him by the hand before he could recover from his astonishment, or those about knew what she was doing. Who the old woman was or where she came from no one knew. The welcome to the statesman was a ridiculous one after all he had gone through, but it was the first he received on again setting foot on his native land.

It has been a matter of pleasure to me to revive the memory of this cruise, and think how everything under Sir Donald Currie's leadership was so perfectly organised and executed, as will be readily understood by those who travel by the Castle Line of steamers, of which he is the chief.

Music Halls.

My first experience of a music hall was with a pantomimic sketch called "Le Rêve de Pierrot," over which I spent a lot of time and money in dresses, scenery, etc., with the result that when I gave it at the "Trocadero,"* though it secured a "call," it was not engaged.

The plot, I remember, was whimsical and original : In scene I. the yawning Pierrot lies down on his couch. Scene II. shows a pretty cottage exterior where Pierrot enacts his dream. Entering at the garden gate, Pierrot sees at the cottage window a wooden figure, which the occupant of the cottage, a ventriloquist, had left there. He falls in love with her (for it is a girl), serenades, and is carrying her off when the ventriloquist returns and stops him. Pierrot shows that his intentions are honourable, whereupon consent and blessing are given, and the foolish Pierrot goes off to the church in a state of ecstasy with his wooden bride. I used ventriloquism in the sketch, making the inanimate doll talk, while the living man, who could speak, only indulged in gesticulation. I was told that such a sketch would delight the Parisians ; possibly it might — the English do not understand poor Pierrot.

An incident happened behind the scenes which made us laugh. I had a large St Bernard dog† of mine in the sketch. When the curtain went down he mistook the white face of a clown, who had been standing at the wings, for mine, and ran to him. The man, alarmed, flew to his room with the dog bounding after him, and was kept a prisoner till I arrived.

* Then a music hall.

† His portrait, taken by Mr Denny, the actor, will be found in this book.

My second attempt on the halls was at the Empire, Portsmouth, where I had an offer to entertain for a week. I remember a rather pretty, pale complexioned girl sat opposite me in the carriage going down, reading a book from which her eyes constantly wandered to the scenery through which we were passing. At Guildford she wanted some milk, which I assisted her to obtain. In the fulness of her gratitude she asked me if I would like to read her book, adding, "I can't make much of it." I was a little staggered at the title, which was "Nimshi, being an attempt to solve the problem of the universe, to gage the depths of planetary concretion and open Bab Allah, the gate of God." I asked her where she procured the book, and she informed me that an old lady had given it to her to read in the train.

To our mutual astonishment we met an hour afterwards at the band rehearsal on the stage of the Empire Theatre.

"You 'ere?" she exclaimed; "why, I thought you was a blooming priest."

This young lady appeared to know all the gentlemen of the orchestra, and they appeared to know her and the songs she sang also, which I need hardly say were not of the same order of literature as the book she gave me in the train. They were written with a reckless indifference to rhyme or metre; but what can you expect in the way of lyrics and melody when from three to five shillings is paid for both? The first one she tried was something of this sort:—

I'm a little country maiden,
My face with smiles is laden,
Where the daisies [pronounced dysais] and the buttercups do grow;
I goes flirtin' now and then [thin],
And I don't think that no sin.
In the fields where the buttercups do grow.

These few remarks were emphasised by a lot of high kicking, when her hat was unmercifully banged by her boot, causing an unwonted display of under linen and black stocking, but what relevance these somewhat indelicate gymnastics had to the song is still to me an unfathomable mystery.

An unmistakable music hall artiste came up to me on the stage and addressed me familiarly with—

“Hullo, Robert!”

“Really, I don’t think that I know you,” I replied.

“Oh, Robert, don’t say that.”

“But I must say it; I don’t remember having seen your face before—who introduced you to me?”

“Well, we wasn’t exactly introduced; you was pointed out to me on the other side of the York Road.”

The songs which I sung did not exactly “paralyze” the audience, as the slang phrase has it, so I discontinued them after the first night and gave selections from my drawing-room entertainment, trying something new each evening, with the result that at the end of the week everyone was re-engaged but myself, of which I was glad. The experience, though amusing as a novelty, I should not care to repeat, my private connection in Southsea being more profitable and certainly more socially agreeable.

The incongruities a music hall audience will applaud show the poverty of its critical judgment—the soldier warrior monologue is an illustration. The scene is a jungle over which an officer is keeping watch—why, Heaven only knows, as there is no reason why anyone should attack a swamp. The officer has leisure to sing about his country and his Queen and his being ready to die for both—unfortunately, *after*, and not *before*, he sings. As all exertion is to be avoided in the tropics the officer, to prove his loyalty, goes through a number of cuts

and guards, finishing up by a salute to the audience and a desperate attack on the enemy, which is, of course, not there, though if it had been, there would have been very few of them left alive. All this gives the public an admirable idea of our officers' behaviour when on foreign service, and inclines it to bear with cheerfulness its ever-increasing burden of taxation, which is to these glories the unavoidable sequence.

The ways of the music hall artiste when on pleasure bent are not those which would commend themselves to the fastidious. I remember feeling abashed when a dashing serio-comic began seeing likenesses to Dan Leno and Herbert Campbell in the portraits in Holyrood Palace, or indulged in a little double shuffle behind some old gentleman who was walking in front of her through its stately and historic rooms.

I joined the variety company in a fishing excursion when at Edinburgh, which, for the fun of the experience, was amusing. Instead of appearing in tights, the two princesses of the slack wire turned up in blouses, skirts, and straw hats.

Their father, (whom I had previously known as the Demon Equilibrist, referred to as Joe Wilks), the princesses (known as Mary and Jane Wilks respectively), Mrs Wilks, who had retired, and a daughter not yet before the public, made up the party. I mention this to give point to a small joke. When it came to settling up, Mr Wilks said in a generous, chivalric, off-hand tone, "We boys will settle up without troubling the ladies." By which piece of gallantry he paid nothing for the two princesses of the slack wire, his wife, and youngest daughter, whereas Albert Christian and I, who were unattended, got rather the worst of it.

In music hall engagements there is no need to know anyone. If you leave after your "turn" you will only have to pass the artiste who precedes and follows you ; the stage you occupy alone. There is more harmony in a variety than in an ordinary theatre, as in a well-arranged programme each performer has a different class of entertainment and so there is no rivalry, whereas in a theatrical company they are all actors. It is a curious fact that those who give *dumb show entertainments* on the stage are good linguists from the very nature of their business, which, being without speech, takes them all over the world.

A conjuror, in order to let the audience know that he had commenced his entertainment, fired several "blanks" from a large revolver. After the first night the "leader" left his seat, saying to me, "I don't mind doing things for gentlemen, but I'm not going to be hit in the eye with a wad by a chap *that can't sound his H's.*"

I remember when I took a variety company out on a short tour an agent sent a lady serio and dancer. When all the others had run through their business at rehearsal, a woman, whom I supposed was there to scrub the stage, came forward, and explained that she was the "lady serio and dancer," and my heart sank as she did so. She hummed through her songs, beating time with her foot to give the band the *tempo* at which she required her dances to be played.

I forgot all about her till it was her turn to come on at night, when she appeared in a short and pretty dress, showing her figure and face, which the dowdy clothes she had worn had completely spoilt. Her singing, and especially her dancing, brought down the house, and she had to take call after call. I complimented her afterwards, and said that I was

a little disappointed when I first saw her. "Nobody bothers me if I dress shabbily," she said; "and then, you see, I am saving up my money to buy a laundry." This struck me as very funny, but it appeared more reasonable when I heard her history. She had been trained by her parents to dance from a mere child, and made to perform for the money she could earn them, so that by the time she was thirty-five she had had enough of a life for which she never had any inclination. When I last heard of her she had her laundry, and was doing very well with it. She was happy in following an occupation which was congenial.

There was a man who, with his sister and his wife, gave a dangerous trapeze performance. He was a handsome man, and the ladies were beautifully formed and handsome women. I asked him if he didn't fear an accident through failing to catch the bars or each other's hands, as they ran the risk night after night. He said, "Yes; any evening, if we are a little out of health, or our nerves are a bit off, or what not, we may get maimed for life. I thought of that, and have bought a hotel which my mother looks after when we are engaged, and which is always ready for us to go to." I am happy to record that, having been pretty well all over the world, they are now, with sound limbs, in the enjoyment of well-earned retirement—if following the business of hotel-keeping can be so called.

The general public are not aware of the large sums of money these dangerous performances command—and rightly command—for these artistes have not so many years during which they can give exhibitions demanding such physical exertions. It is an absolute condition of all such business that the artistes live as men do in training. Any idea that they drink,

smoke, dissipate, or live irregular lives is of course absurd. I have never seen the cruelty so dilated upon by novelists in training children. If a lad does not love and take pride in his work he will never make an acrobat by the employment of a whip to his back, and such a lad would only waste a trainer's time. Plenty of lads like such a life, and no man need bother with a boy who has no ambition to succeed.

From St Helens one Sunday I went with Charles Coborn to Prescot to hear the "Messiah." It was given by amateurs who filled the steam road car that took us there. A 'cello lay upon the coals at one end of the car, and the girls and young men who sat around all had singing parts, or carried instruments. Before going to the schoolroom, where the afternoon service was held, as we had had no lunch, we went into the public-house on alighting, and secured two meat pies and two glasses of ale. The pies the landlord had intended for his own consumption, and they did credit to his judgment. I had a second glass of ale, for it was a hot afternoon; but just as Coborn was going to follow my example a policeman appeared and no more drink was allowed to be served.

Following the stream of girls who were going to sing "Unto us a Son is born," we found the schoolroom and took a seat at the end. It was very pleasant there with a nice breeze blowing through the room. The young people sang and played very well, which struck me as very creditable to the dwellers in that Lancashire town. During a short address by the preacher from Liverpool, he said, to our alarm, "I see humbly seated at the back that two beloved brothers from Ashton-in-Makersfield, who promised to give us the light of their countenances, are here, and I shall now ask them to take my place, and perhaps one brother will give

a short address and the other will close the meeting with a few words and a benediction." I have always had an idea that more could be made of the opportunities which the pulpit offered, and I suggested to Coborn that I should give them an address ; but he is not a humourist on Sundays, and dissuaded me so that when an emissary came and sounded us on the subject we told him that we were not clergymen, but music hall artistes, and, seeing the possibilities of a small advertisement, we gave our cards. The discourse he afterwards gave dwelt on the merits of Shakespeare, and made special reference to Mark Antony. This was the nearest he could get to Ganthonny, which, being absolute fact, will probably be doubted. They wanted very little to clear the debt for which the oratorios had been organised. A pound from each of us added to the collection, I think cancelled the debt, and left a favourable impression on that preacher's mind of the music hall performer. A request from the preacher that those living in Prescot should each take to their homes some of those who had come from St Helens to play and sing and give them some tea and see to them till the evening service, resulted in an allotment of musicians to the audience as it passed out till all were disposed of. We were offered a welcome to one cottage, which we gratefully declined.

A letter received from a miner addressed, "Mister Manager, Esquire," was amusing and much funnier than I am able to recall it.

MISTER MANAGERE,—I hev decided to go on the staige as I doant want to be underground no more, and sein as I maun do summat, lad, for a lifin ; I arsk thee to gie me a job as singer in compeney at St Helens. A urly anser be aprisheated, lad, for I be a fairish singer I tell the, lad, but I carnt be no more underground.

The miner is still underground, however, and will

probably remain there till he dies—and long afterwards.

The love of clog-dancing in the North is amazing. In their private competitions the judges sit *under the floor*, and, listening, count the toe taps, awarding the prizes by sense of *hearing*, and not *sight*, which seems a curious way of judging dancing.

I have found in sketches which I have written for others that good work has been more effective than the drivel and cheap sentiment I wonder any manager permits. In a sketch, "All for Dolly," which I wrote for Evelyn Hughes, a child gives a doll her recollections of a music hall. From Brighton to Aberdeen this monologue was a remarkable success. I last saw it given at a pantomime at the first named town without the slightest acknowledgment, in fact, as though the author of the pantomime had written it.

A wire walker at the Empire, Newcastle, among other dangerous things he did on the wire, carried his wife across on his back. An interesting family event, from which not even wire walkers are exempt, deprived this gentleman of his wife's services. This would have lost him a profitable tour, which had taken him some time to book, had not another wire walker lent him his wife, who performed the same acts as the young mother would have done, including being carried across the wire. When they had taken their nightly call they just said "good night" and hurried off, she with her husband, and he to his wife.

The little interrupter of the wife's professional duties would be taken down to the theatre by the maid, and placed where the mother could see it in its mail cart. After removing her skirt and donning a pair of practice shoes, she would seize a Japanese

umbrella, and on the wire, fitted a few feet from the stage, by hours of practice regain the balance and confidence she had lost in the cause of maternity.

I often saw her, as I used to fasten my drawing papers in the morning, so as to have them ready in the evening. In the middle of her practice the baby, attracted by the bright colours which the sun shining through the umbrella made, stretched out its little hands towards her, when she flung aside the umbrella and was instantly kneeling by its side kissing it, forgetting that she was a wire walker in her delight at being a mother; and so it is, under all the glitter, beneath all the spangles, Nature, Nature, and still everywhere Nature.



A. B. C.

THE A—mateur B—icycle C—lub, of which I am proud of being an original member, was started in 1871, a few days before the "Pickwick," and is therefore the oldest cycling club in existence. We were, in the old days, even more rational in our habits than English ladies are to-day. We had our annual race meeting, but at other times we rode leisurely, and sympathised with each other's pursuits. If an entomologically inclined member perceived a rare specimen of a spider in the road bank, we all, as a matter of course, assisted in the chase till the insect was captured and added to his collection. Those who were botanists enjoyed the same sympathy. I was allowed to make a sketch, or Custance to change his singlet, an amusement in which he delighted whenever the country afforded him a retiring room consistent with his universally admitted modesty. In the

archives of the club there are sketches of our worthy chief performing this graceful act of hygienic toilette which would be reproduced here but that they are too sacred to be submitted to the present generation of riders, who have no reverence for the cycle of time.

We dined at Mr Henry Custance's rooms, then at the Middlesex Hospital, and formed ourselves into a club, after which others started arraying themselves in uniforms and forming in twos, fours, etc., to bugle calls, which was all very well, but we never aspired to be an amateur cycle cavalry, or play at soldiers on wheels. My original acquaintance with the A. B. C. was before I went to the States, and was renewed lately through the club engaging me professionally at one of their annual dinners, when I asked to be re-elected by members now middle-aged, whom I had known as young men.

So many people ride cycles now, and they have become so easy and respectable, that the purpose of a club has died out, as companions can always be found, and riding in company is no longer the rarity it was. This is demonstrated in the A. B. C., for, though we have the most delightful runs *on paper*, I have never seen anyone turn up at the club meets. I smoked two cigars under the shady trees comfortably seated outside the "Bear" at Esher, and did the same at the "Star and Garter," Richmond, and as a majority can alter the arranged route, and I was alone, I did so and rode home. We had one meet on our lawn to which our secretary came in a hansom, but that day there was excuse, for it poured in torrents. Three men turned up at the Rev. W. d'A. Crofton's house at Standon, Herts. I rode from Richmond, as I should have done in the old days, but the other two, Herbert Canning (captain) and Henry N. Custance (hon.

secretary and treasurer), took the train to within five minutes' ride from the house. In consequence they arrived much fresher and cooler than I did, which is manifique, but it is not the *gear*.



Cycling in the Past.

WHEN my father was eighteen—over sixty years ago—he had a cycle built by a coachbuilder named Oxborrow, at Saxmundham, on which he performed the then unheard of feat of riding to London in a day. The velocipede was built like a coach with a solid high splash board upon which the cyclist leaned, while, half standing, half sitting, he worked directly on the treadles beneath him steering the machine by an upright lever at his side. The building of the machine caused local gossip, and my father found himself interviewed by the *East Anglian* and the *Ipswich Express* before he started. The journey was recorded in most of the London papers, so great a novelty was it then considered. Now he flies down to Brighton in a few hours and no notice is taken of him except by some yokel who says, "Oi say, Meister, doan't you think it be time th' gived oop?"

When my father was preparing to get on his machine at Saxmundham he found that the crank was at a dead centre, so he backed it.

"That ain't the way to London," the crowd shouted.

"No," he replied, "but it's the way to start," and left them pondering over his retort as they watched him disappear down the road.

In the old days, an indiarubber band round the tyre was looked upon as an interesting innovation

among us, as we all had iron tyres. We had then to jump on to our saddles, which were set on a long steel spring, nearly as long as the machine, and heavy enough to be used on a locomotive, for weight seemed to be of no consequence in those days when the cycle was ornamented with solid iron leg rests and a curling prow weighing pounds. The power was misdirected and the strain on the hands so great that we had to unbend our fingers when we stopped for food before we could hold a knife and fork.

At the towns and villages, I remember, on my first long journey, which was to Weston-super-Mare and back, the people collected to see us start, the doubt among them being as to how we kept the cycles from tumbling over sideways.

In those days the public jeered at cyclists because they did not go faster, now they fine them in batches *for going too fast!* and now, if an accident happens to a motor car, the mob stand and scoff, laugh, and jeer, though an omnibus accident on the other side of the way does not raise a smile. The stupendous folly consists, in my judgment, in allowing vehicles, which are drawn by easily frightened animals who tear up streets, and make them filthy and unhealthy, at the same time that they double the length of the vehicle; but as long as magistrates talk, and writers write such absolute nonsense about cycles, how is it to be expected that civic rulers—the less gifted masses—can wipe out the stains of precedent from their memories and look at future locomotion with minds not hampered by tradition?

At one time the public thought it amusing to allow guards of coaches to throw weights, attached to strings, at passing cycles, and throw the riders in the road; capital fun, which deserved, in my opinion, capital punishment.

Every year brought out an entirely new bicycle. I remember buying a "Phantom" which steered with both wheels, the handle bar turning both, which was no practical advantage, as most of the work to be done was straight ahead. This machine, however, introduced the wire-hung wheels instead of the wooden wheels with iron tyres. The next I had, I think, was made by Beck the optician, and was a forerunner of the pneumatic, the tyre being solid indiarubber threaded on to a steel circular rod which clinched it on to a grooved rim. This machine rode very easily over rough roads but soon tired one. I had a large front wheel machine made, as I saw that by doing so I should go further for each turn of the crank. When I returned from abroad I found this pattern in vogue. The man who invented the present back wheel gear rode his machine about and swore by it, but it was not till his patent was lost through his inability to keep it up that the manufacturers copied his model and made fortunes which he too, I believe, has done since, but not with cycles.

Those who write about cycles going out of fashion are expressing an opinion upon a subject upon which they can have had but little experience, for anyone who has ridden for thirty years understands the practical value of the machine in its present state of perfection as a means of getting about without loss of time and money. As the rising generation of workmen take to the cycle, our congested cities will be relieved by their living a little out of town and bringing up their families in a purer atmosphere and healthier surroundings. The stream of workmen who pass night and morning between Winton and Bournemouth is not a consequence of "fashion" but a proof of practical utility.

ACTOR PORTRAITURE.



*Taken by W. S. Penley ("Charley's Aunt") in his Garden at Woking.
Author and his "Swift."*



*Taken by W. H. Denny (late of Savoy Theatre) in his Garden at Richmond.
Author and his "Barney."*



I have not entirely given up the railway because cycling is a "fashion," but because I prefer to spend the time in exercise to sitting in a stuffy or draughty carriage, with these additional advantages—that I can get to town quicker, start when I like, do not get wet, as I carry poncho and leggings, and the journey costs nothing.

I always rode when at the Egyptian Hall, Alhambra, etc., through fog, snow, frost, rain, and at every hour of the day and night, so I speak from experience, and am only advocating what will become universal when motor vehicles allow of better roads, and cycles are still further improved.

There is a lot written about the superiority of the horse by those who refer contemptuously to the cycle. If advanced as a means of locomotion this is not true, as a cyclist has beaten the pace of the Derby winners, and for distance most cyclists can do easily what would kill the best horse that ever lapped rock salt. For instance, at a country house a mile or so from the village any of the family would be there on a cycle by the time a trap was got ready, so superiority does not rest with the horse in fleetness, endurance, convenience, or economy. They say you can love a horse—well, so you can your grandmother. I have ridden horses from childhood, American, African, and English, and my experience is that there is a great deal of trouble with horses and their ailments. I love them as I do my bicycle or typewriter; but I see no need to give up a clearer and more rapid method of writing by going back to a goose quill than I do for relinquishing mechanical for animal locomotion.

I have ridden "Sparkbrook," "Premier," "Swift," all of which, after two years' experience of each, I found serviceable machines. The last one I had built for me by Knight & Day, Battersea, who have supplied

a machine which is faster, and lighter in price and weight, than any, costing £14 instead of £27, which price, as they neither advertise nor have expensive premises, pays them. I rode to Windsor recently after dinner, had a look at the castle, filled a knapsack I bought there with blackberries, and got home to tea, which speaks well for the machine, as I am no longer a boy and weigh over fourteen stone.

I do not like to conclude my cycling chapter without advising all riders to get rid of the iron scoop front mud-guard, and substitute a detachable one to the frame rod, which not only can be rolled up and put away if facing a gale or when the roads are dry, but allows the foot to be used as a brake should the pedals snap, chain break, front tyre puncture, or other accident render the brake ineffective. Nearly all the accidents down hill would be avoided by taking this precaution.

To prevent the daily loss of life, I suggested this in a letter to the *Daily Mail*, but their cycle writer negatived my effort to do good by saying that the foot must be placed "between the crown of the fork and the tyre." I wonder who ever could have told him that. If you value your life, reader, try putting your foot on the tyre, when the revolution of the wheel will show you where it must be placed; the break you have will stop you dead on any hill; and a time may come when you may prefer stopping to being smashed to pieces.

In the old days we hung our legs over the handles and toed our tyres; but ladies ride now, and this method would scarcely suit them, even if it was practicable in the present-day machines.

I asked a well-known journalist the other day to have a spin to Brighton and back, but he declined saying—

"I am no rider."

"But you *write* about cycling."

"Ah," he said with a smile, "*that is a very different matter.*"



The Land of the Ostrich.

SOME years ago—nearly two thousand, I believe—an Italian named Pliny said, "Semper aliquid novi Africa affert," and my experiences coincide with his remark—that Africa *is* a country of surprises.

I expected to see a long, swampy, pestilential shore, with a few unemployed blacks, in various stages of undress, loafing around under the shade of waving cocoanut trees, instead of which I found an electric-lighted harbour, a town with shops that would not disgrace Piccadilly, and, though I looked for them, no cocoanut trees.

Captain Rhodes—the brother of Cecil—told me, at dinner, a story about cocoanut trees which is not unfit for publication. A brother officer of his sent a sketch home of some event which happened at Suakim. When the papers reached Africa the officer saw that a number of cocoanut trees had been added to his sketch by the London artist who had re-drawn it. This inaccuracy incensed him, and he wrote to the London editor as follows :—

SIR,—What the devil do you mean by putting cocoanuts in my sketch? Are you not aware that there are no cocoanuts within a hundred miles of Suakim?

To which the editor replied :—

SIR,—We are sorry to have caused you any disquietude, but the fact is, that the British public *will have cocoanuts*, and we were compelled to make this concession to popular taste.

Having heard from infancy that the ostrich was a

bird which stuck its head in the sand and then fancied that no one could see it, I had another surprise when I found the surface of the Karoo as hard as the road in Cheapside.

At home we often confuse the East coast of South Africa with the West, and so give it a character for being unhealthy; whereas Cape Colony used to be a health resort for British residents in India, when the voyage home in sailing ships was too long and costly. The number of sanatoria established, and now being established, which cure any disease amenable to climatic treatment, completely refute this mistaken notion.

The reader will say—But a climate which produces sugar, tea, indigo, etc., must be a hot, and a consequently unhealthy, climate, which is true; but it must be remembered that the whole of South Africa rises as it leaves the coast, and as every 300 feet give a drop of one degree in the thermometer, there is, say between Johannesburg—which is 6000 feet about the sea level—and Delagoa Bay, *in the same latitude*, a difference of 20 degrees—the altitude of the Transvaal correcting the tropical effect of its latitude.

The agricultural wealth of South Africa fascinated me far more than the mineral; and the Boer farmer has my sympathy in preferring the natural life of agriculture to spending his time in metal-hunting.

Among the little crowd waiting to greet the voyagers as the *Tantallon Castle* moored alongside the wharf was my manager, Mr Luscombe Searelle, who briefly told me that we should play one night at the Hope Hall, Cape Town, and leave the next evening (Thursday) for Johannesburg; that a carriage was waiting to take Miss Marie Loftus, her husband, and

myself to the Waverley Hotel, and that the agent would see to our luggage. He then left to welcome Sir Charles and Lady Hallé, who had come out in the same steamer, and were engaged to tour under his management, as was also Miss Fortescue, then playing at the Opera House. We walked down the gangway, entered our carriage, and were soon rattling along the wharf in the bright morning sunshine, having had far less bother than I have often experienced landing from a penny steamboat.

We caught a glimpse of the half-naked blacks coaling a steamer, and saw a corner of Cape Town, after which the Malay driver, with his quaint, conical hat, soon had us dashing along into the country, past pretty bungalows on our left, while the South Atlantic waves broke on the dark rocks on our right. The carriage turned up a drive with trees meeting over our heads, then round a marble fountain, and we soon found ourselves at the entrance to a comfortable, shaded hotel.

It was a little early for breakfast, but we were quite ready for it after we had seen our rooms—for landing in a strange country from a sea voyage has a beneficial effect upon the appetite.

What a sense of space I experienced as I entered my room after the confined cabin ! What a feeling of freedom there was in the two French windows opening on to a lawn, round which semi-tropical plants grow in luxuriance, in contrast to the misty dead light, with its circular scape of sea and sky ! All this was a relief to me, but what must it have been in former years, when the first *Tantallon Castle* was a sailing vessel, which probably got becalmed on the line, and occupied I don't like to think how long on the passage.

We had some lovely drives round Constantia, where

the finest grapes in the world are grown, and some of the loveliest scenery is to be found—lilies growing wild in the ditches, and masses of beautiful flowers of all shades of colour hanging from the rocks at the base of the mountains at the roadside. And what a climate it was in the springtime of September!—neither too hot nor too cold, with a blue sky and perpetual sunshine.

At the Hope Hall, where Marie Loftus and I were “starred,” we had to turn people away on Wednesday night. All the company had a good reception except one semi-amateur singer, who was so very confident of success, and twitted me upon my nervousness. The audience would not allow him to finish his first song, and would not allow him to begin his second. When I heard him straining his voice at rehearsal to impress us, I thought he knew very little. He said to me when all was over, with an accent of astonishment, “They took to you!”

“Yes,” I replied. “Funny, wasn’t it?”

The next excitement was the departure of the train for the interior. Talk about a crowd at a railway station! Kaffirs, Malays, coolies, miners, men going hunting, railway making; our variety company, and people to see them off; Miss Fortescue and her company, and people to see them off; young Englishmen going to join the Border Police, and numbers without the least idea of what they were going for.

“If you made everyone who came on the platform purchase a ticket you’d make a fortune,” I remarked to a railway official.

“We do,” he replied, after which I left people in South Africa to attend to their own business.

A small deputation came up to me through the crowd and presented me with a set of African gold

stud from the ladies on board, as a little return for the entertainments I had given during the voyage. This was one of the surprises Pliny refers to, and was very pleasant.

In the hubbub and bustle I began to feel that my chance of getting a seat in the crowded train was becoming remote, when I heard a voice at my elbow calling to me from a carriage window—

“Do you want a seat, Mr Ganthony?”

I did; and, entering the car at the end, walked along the corridor, when my new found friends drew me into their compartment and quickly refastened the door. The sides of the carriage let down and form beds, three on each side. In the obscurity they appeared to be occupied by travellers already asleep, but they turned out to be merely dummies, made up to keep the apartment select.

One of my companions told me that he had seen me at the Hope Hall the previous evening, and the other that he had seen me at the Alhambra. This man I found had been a well-known music-hall artiste himself, working in conjunction with another. When his partner died he decided to try his luck in South Africa, where he had a brother. His friends met him on his arrival, and he told them what he proposed to do; he even went further, for he gave them an exhibition of his skill, and the different grotesque noses and dresses upon which he prided himself. When he had finished in dead silence the dances which had hitherto obtained him thunders of applause there came a pause, after which his brother said, “For God’s sake do something serious; what’s the good of that tomfoolery?” At first he told me he resented this view of his art, but his brother and his friend were so deadly serious and so decided as to what he should do that towards the small hours, after a long argument, he

gave in, and, taking his wigs, false noses, costumes, make up, etc., he made a bonfire of them, round which they all danced like Indians. He abandoned them for ever. He travelled up country with his friends who set him up in a winkle—a small store—and the man who saw me at the last music hall he visited in London was then the proprietor of a prosperous store and an hotel, with every prospect in a few years of being able to sell out and retire.

It seems to me a pity that the train starts at night, as the scenery just after it leaves and ascends the Hex mountains is the finest, the Veldt and Karoo being rather monotonous. I tried to get a glimpse of it by the light of the new moon, but the cold was so intense that I could not stay out on the platform of the carriage to do so. I suspect the starting of the train is arranged so that they may arrive at the stations, of which there are not so many, at meal times, which the majority of passengers would consider more important than scenery.

I expected to see ostriches in abundance, but we had to look out for them, and discovered them enclosed in a neat wire fencing and white painted gates! I did not expect to see such an accumulation of bottles, tins, old clothes, and rubbish—which had been thrown out of the train by passengers—as adorns the side ditches of the railway.

The approach to Johannesburg one assumed to be like the entrance to a mining town, but it was quite different. There is a little similarity in the head gears, but the long chimneys look more like distant Hudson River steamers, for these smoke stacks are of American manufacture, and further, there is no dirt as in the Black Country. The town looked suburban and clean, and when we entered at dawn the electric lights were still burning at the mines, like starry

AMATEUR PORTRAITURE.



The Author crushing Quartz on a New Mine.



The Author in a Native Mail Cart.



guides to fortune, as far as the eye could see across the barren plain.

I had, at the risk of cutting my throat, half shaved myself, when we stopped at Park Station, so, with my face half bearded, I had to make a hasty packing and alight. The train had arrived half an hour before its time, which, when you are in the middle of your toilette, is more inconvenient than being late.

All our luggage should have been examined, but it wasn't, as such a thing as a bribe did not appear to be unknown in the Transvaal. The young ladies who had been to Johannesburg before had good-looking Jew cicisbeos to meet them, who drove down in swagger turnouts and carpet slippers, while the ladies looked, as they emerged from the half-awakened train, as if attired for a garden party or a wedding, though I didn't hear of any marriages taking place among them.

The last time I saw Mr Searelle in England was on a river trip in his steam launch on Bank Holiday, when all the sleeping accommodation we could get at Maidenhead was a dining-room. After the genuine boarders had retired, we occupied the sofa and the floor; but when his brother met me at Park Station things appeared to be worse than that. We drove round to all the hotels in Johannesburg, but not one could give me accommodation. A young man employed at the theatre offered me his rooms to dress in, and when I had finished shaving, had had a bath, changed my clothes, which I had slept in for three nights in the train, and had breakfasted at a restaurant, I recommenced my search for "diggins."

As the hotels were all crammed and thousands of people were arriving every week, I began to feel towards Sunday evening that the foxes and the birds of the air had the best of it as regards lodgings. A man I knew who had an extra room during his

illness, hearing of my predicament, offered me his sick bed, from which he obligingly rose. I congratulated myself on my good luck, but when I went to my bedroom and unlocked the door, which opened on to a piazza encircling the hotel, I found a lady asleep in the bed. Her presence accounted for the skirts by the side of which I had hung my coat and vest. Being a modest man, I paused as soon as I perceived the dormant occupant, and was resuming the few garments I had taken off when the lady awoke, and changed my flight to a conversation. I told her I was there because I understood the room was mine, when she explained that, tired out with nursing my friend, the late invalid, and not knowing that anyone was to occupy the room, she thought she would get a few hours' sleep before the night coach took her to some other duty. As the vehicle started in a couple of hours I said I would go for a walk and return after she had gone. As a matter of fact, I saw her go off by the coach before returning to my—to our—room. I lay outside the bed and slept till the Kassir brought a cup of coffee in the morning, which he dropped on the floor on finding the hospital nurse he had left there metamorphosed into a fourteen-stone Englishman.

On the opening night at the Theatre of Varieties some men in front would not allow me to commence, so I stopped the band and argued with them, saying that if they heard my entertainment and didn't care for it I was ready to abide by their verdict, but it was hardly fair to condemn me without a hearing, as they did not know what I was going to do. After that I was allowed to proceed, with the result that the audience became interested and insisted upon an encore, but I was out of humour and merely bowed. The uproar continued, and I bowed again, declining

to do anything more, till the manager said that unless I did they would tear up the seats, when, to save the furniture, I gave another item and order was restored. As is often the case, I was made the victim for some other quarrel. Mr Searelle having very properly forbidden the betting men to make bets during the performance, they took this opportunity of showing their displeasure. After the first night, with occasional interruptions which I hereafter chronicle, I got along all right.

In the middle of my performance one evening, a man in the stalls shouted "Rats!"

"There was no necessity to say that," I retorted. The show was going rather better and more peaceable than usual.

The interrupter rose up and addressed the audience.

"I beg Bob's pardon! It's very good! Ladies and gentlemen, I apologise for what I said. I apologise all round."

I don't often laugh on the stage, but when the apologist sat down I could not help it, the whole thing seemed so absurd. The audience joined in and all went well afterwards. As the same people went every night, any little incident of this kind was preferred to the regular entertainment.

Another night a jockey having won a race, thought that he was privileged to interrupt everyone on the stage from a box. I stopped and asked him what he had to say, when a voice from the gallery replied, "We don't want to hear what he has to say, Robert, he's too drunk to talk sense." This was confirmed by the jockey leaning over to argue with my champion and falling into the orchestra, where he was allowed to remain till sober.

A magic lantern turn gave the audiences as many

opportunities for being satirical as most things. During the course of a series of pictures, when the lecturer said, "The birthplace of the poet Burns," a voice from the darkened room added, "An' I was born in a house on the last plate."

When Hampton Court Bridge was shown, I suggested to the lecturer that he should add, that to the left, seven minutes' walk up the road, was Torr Lodge, the residence of Mr Luscombe Searelle. This was done next night, and the picture subsequently changed to a grand hall in the Tuilleries, with ornate furniture and polished floors. Before the lecturer could say what the picture was, a voice in the stalls bawled out, "Luscombe Searelle's Drawing-Room." After that all allusion to Torr Lodge was suppressed.

In my letters in the London papers I was made to say that the society of Johannesburg consisted of "outsiders" and "rank outsiders," but what I said was that from the inhabitants' own description of themselves they appeared to be so. When one man spoke of another he generally characterised him as an "outsider" or "rank outsider," but no one as an "insider," which amused me, and I mentioned it as something funny. I never gave them these characters, because I do not know what the terms mean, though I believe they are not complimentary.

This misrepresentation reminds me of another, in which an interviewer made me reply to a fictitious question as to whether I amused the party in the *Tantallon Castle* Baltic trip? "Yes, I tickled the whole shoot of them"—a vulgarity of expression I never did, and never should, use.

The "boom" was on when I was in South Africa; swagger turnouts took the place of the Kaffir-pulled rickshaw, and the Theatre of Varieties was crammed,

though there was an opposition music hall. When my sister went out, the hall was a theatre, which she, alone, filled nightly—an unheard-of feat for a single-handed entertainer in recent years.

I could not walk down Commissioner Street without being stopped every few minutes by someone who had seen me at some garden party, dinner, or music hall in England, which was quite enough introduction.

One warm day I discarded my waistcoat, and was off with my sketch book and camera in search of "copy," when a man stopped me and said, "Hullo, Ganthonry, how are you?" He was a perfect stranger, so I said, "How did you know that my name was Ganthonry?" "Well," he replied, "you have Ganthonry written on your shirt, and, as you look like a gentleman, I don't suppose you would wear anyone else's." As he left smiling, I had a dim consciousness that I had been pelted with a chestnut.

Outside my bedroom window at the hotel was a large provender store, and every morning as I drew up my blind I saw the picturesque oxen of the Boer farmer's trekk-waggon lying or standing in the bright sunshine, as he unloaded his cargo of green barley or other spring produce, while his fair haired children played in the covered end, in which, when travelling, the Boer lives.

This scene, which was being enacted every morning all through the Transvaal, was quietly but surely creating a good feeling, and only required time—only time and the wealth of heart there is in all humanity—to ultimately bring about a right understanding between the Dutch and the British. It was not to be, however; the boom had been carried to its limit, and the financiers had to do something to cover their retreat, and so a revolution was inaugurated which didn't revolve, the scum of the district were

paid a pound a day for their patriotism, and supplied with arms and ammunition, to their own danger and that of the inhabitants, while the Boers, who knew perfectly well what was going on, surrounded Johannesburg with thousands of men, who could at a signal have cut off the water from Dornfontein, and the supply of food by rail or road from everywhere. The whole business of the raid and everything else was as farcical as the misery which accompanied it was tragic, but the political aspect of South Africa, though it wants boldly writing about, must not be written on foolscap, nor with a goose quill, and therefore has no place in this book.

There was no lack of society in Johannesburg. I knew Marius, Miss Marie Montrose, and most of the members of the George Edwards' company, with whom I had very many little suppers and dinners. I was elected a member of the Rand Club, where I met a crowd of men I knew, or who had known me in England. I gave my entertainment at several private houses, which, with their sumptuous appointments, electric lighting, etc., suggested Lowndes Square more than a home on the veldt.

The Theatre of Varieties at which I performed was dragged piece by piece across the plain on waggons drawn by oxen, in the days when people used provision cases for seats and tables, and sometimes the bare veldt for a mattrass and pillow, and this only eight or so years ago, on the spot where now tram cars run past handsome electric lighted shops, and *ten-in-hand* coaches, up-to-date bicycles, endless teams of oxen-drawn waggons make up the variety of the busy traffic of the town dedicated to Johanna!

It was amusing to find how those artistes who danced, or went through other exertion, thought

something was wrong with their lungs through failing to understand how the altitude rarefied the air and caused shortness of breath.

I gave my own monologue entertainment at the President Theatre, in Pretoria, and had as charming and attentive an audience as I ever played to. But for a dust storm, followed by a deluge of rain, it would have been larger. I have written much about Pretoria in *The Sketch, South Africa*, etc., which need not be repeated here. The locality was selected by the Dutch, not for gold, but for residence. Running streams ripple through its streets, the hedges are a mass of roses, oranges and lemons mix with apples and grapes, and avenues of blue gum trees offer shaded walks. If you are an early riser you can have a cup of coffee with Oom Paul—who is not such a bad fellow as he is made out to be. He does his best for his country—that is, for the country taken from the Kaffir—and for his people, who claim it as theirs; and who can blame him? I saw at the Museum the assegai which killed the young Prince Imperial; a cannon made by a Boer out of the hub-rings of waggon wheels; the diary of S. P. Trichardt, who "trekked" through the Transvaal in 1837; a hand bell which was formerly used to summon the Boer Parliament from their waggons to settle affairs of State, which were more easily disposed of then, when they only had half a crown in the Treasury, than they are now.

I often went to Krügersdorp—the village or dorp named after the president—and walked across the veldt to the Falls, which come as a surprise at the end of a sluggish stream terminating in a sudden declivity, and falling among the rocks to the valley below, marking its course by a luxurious growth of ferns, trees, and flowers. It was here I found a fine

specimen of orthopteron, which I got to England alive, introduced to Lord and Lady Annaly and Captain Rhodes on the *Norham Castle*, and to the members of the Savage Club, and then gave to the Zoological Gardens. When it died, they sent it at my request to the British Museum (Natural History), whose director informed me it was the finest specimen that had ever reached England—those previously sent being in spirits, which destroy the colour. And if, reader, you wish to know what I can do in the way of orthopterons, you have only to ask to see mine to find out.

I also collected a five-chambered revolver from a man, who drew it on me at the hotel. I put him out of the room for throwing a glass of wine in a girl's face at the hotel *table d'hôte*, because she would not talk to him after he had insisted on sitting at her table. The revolver adorns my study. What he received in return he carries about with him.

I gave an entertainment at a little hall erected on the veldt behind the Dutch Church at Krügersdorp, round which the Boers had out-spanned their oxen on the chance of hearing a little music through the open windows. After the stillness of their solitary farms, this would be welcome. The first night was well attended, but on the second not a soul came, a treacherous wind having begun to blow, which invalidated half the village and kept the other half indoors. The stationer and bookseller who took the money and sold booking tickets gave me a bogus cheque on the Sunday I left, which I had returned to me too late to attend to it, as I was on my way home. So the Krügersdorp speculation did not turn out a profitable one.

There are a number of unprofitable mines which have been floated on the high tide of European



Flight of Locusts. Taken at Pretoria.



confidence, and are now deserted, leaving villages, whose inhabitants are connected with them, to spend their time in loafing and drinking till a renewed burst of confidence allows them to sell and clear out.

I have seen two billiard matches in my life—one when Roberts was playing in the room under us at the Egyptian Hall, and the other when I met the champion of South Africa, whom I knew, at a village hotel. He had been engaged by the proprietor to play an English officer, to whom he conceded points. What a contrast in these two matches! I shall only describe the one in the Transvaal. As the time drew near the funniest crowd I ever saw began to collect about the hotel, crowding round the bar like bees at swarming time. A lot of rough chairs and seats round the barn-like billiard-room were soon filled when time was called; the rest of the crowd bulged out through the open doors into the starry night. The game had not proceeded far when the tobacco smoke began to get the best of the oil lamp which lighted up the table. The spectators had as much to say to the players as they had to the performers at the theatre. A man would smack a sovereign down on the edge of the table when the champion was about to play, accompanied by a bet, which the player ignored, as he quietly transferred the coin to his pocket and continued his stroke. Towards midnight the atmosphere became very thick, and the effects of the adjournments to the bar were that many of the spectators fell off to sleep. If they slumbered on chairs they were immediately deposited on the floor by those who were tired of standing.

When the game was over, those who were too drunk to move, if they were guests at the hotel, were carried to their rooms; if not, they were left where they were. As I had been told that I could have a bed, I asked

to be shown to it, when the Kaffir boy with a lantern took me round the courtyard, on to which the bedrooms opened, and examined them, only to find that they were all full, though each, to my disgust, contained two beds!

A more elaborate scrutiny on the part of the landlord discovered a sleeper who had only paid to see the billiard match, so he was promptly removed from the bed and carried back to the billiard-room from which he had migrated, and left there on the floor.

"Can I not have a single-bedded room?" I asked.

"That man will only be there till four," he replied, "*so it's like having the room to yourself.*"

I didn't think so, but it was no use making a fuss, as it was long past midnight, and no other lodging was procurable.

My room mate, who was sound asleep, had not spent much time on his toilet, having merely removed his boots. I went one worse, for I put on my overcoat, and made a pillow of my big, soft felt hat. The room was small and oblong, containing two trundle beds, with just space between them to accommodate a painted washstand, which was supplied with one towel, a toothbrush, tied by a piece of string to the leg to secure it from appropriation, a basin and jug. Behind this washstand each preceding occupant had left his soiled or worn-out collars, cuffs, dickies, etc., till the accumulation half buried it. The door was half glass, with a dingy lace blind fixed with tape and tin tacks as a measure of security against the pruriently inquisitive. The wall paper had evidently been used as the nearest available means of transferring flame from the candle to the occupier's pipe while smoking in bed. I looked at all these things till the candle went out, when I closed my eyes and slept till the Kaffir, with unnecessary clamour, awoke

my companion, who, pulling on his boots, hurried out into the obscurity of early morn.

I opened the door for ventilation and again fell asleep, when the man who had been transferred to the billiard-room found his way, by that extraordinary instinct a drunkard possesses, back to the chamber from which he had been so unceremoniously removed. The instant his foot sounded on the cobble stones outside I awoke, and, as it was dawn, saw him enter, wondering what was the purpose of his visit. It was evidently pacific, for he sat on the recently occupied bed, and having added to my comfort by lighting a strong pipe, he gave my bed a kick and opened up a conversation by saying—

“Have you—(hic)—any whisky?”

“No.”

“Tha’s a mistake; you should always have—(hic)—whisky, for you never know when anyone may happen to require some.”

Receiving no sympathy in regard to his thirst, he changed the subject, and, after staring at the walls for some time, he got up, and taking the loose ends, began tearing the paper off in sheets, interpolating a few remarks between the removal of each sheet to the effect that the paper was coming off the walls, which was a fact that his activity placed beyond the pale of discussion.

“I say, the paper’s coming off the wall—(tear)—the paper’s coming off the blooming wall”—(tear). When he had half filled the room with paper he said, “I am un’er the ‘pression that you are sleeping on my bed.”

“That’s the one you were sleeping in before you went out.”

“Did I g’ out?”

“Certainly, or you could not have come in.”

“Tha’s true. I like you, an’ I sho—ave—li—you

better if I was'n un'er the 'pression that you're sleeping on my bed, and you hadn't forgot the—(hic)—whisky."

Having filled and lighted another pipe he rambled on about his smartness in swindling the public with a worthless mine, which I concisely repeat *pour encourager les autres*.

Four of them started a mine over the hill where I had seen the rusty, tarpaulin-covered engine and equally rusty and idle battery. They put its shares on the market, but only sold them to one another. The output of gold they made appear promising by crushing selected quartz. By their own transactions the quoted price of the shares went up, by faking the crushings the yield appeared to constantly improve, till the would-be sharp, but easily humbugged investors, who had been watching this mine in the papers, began to invest, when the original starters unloaded, appointed new managers, etc., and, leaving them to face the wrath to come, disappeared as the man had done whose discretion had been sapped by drink.

I went for a picnic in a waggon across the veldt, the provisions consisting of salt herrings, cold fowl, and drinks, packed in boxes and stowed away under the cross planks which served as seats. When an extra-sized bump occurred, followed by a smash of bottles, everyone would jump off and look at the colour of the liquid which trickled through the bottom of the waggon in order to ascertain the precise nature of our loss.

What struck me as characteristic of my countrymen when abroad was, that if we came to a Boer's farm, the man's tools would be taken out, his ground dug over wantonly, and the things thrown about, or empty bottles thrown at the inoffensive Kaffir, who regarded his tormentors in dignified wonder. We are a great people of course, but the contrast between our Bibles

and behaviour rather puzzles the mind of the native, whose property we confiscate in this world, and, in return, through our missionaries, offer him an unlimited area of Paradise in the next.

From the time I arrived in South Africa I was



surprised, as I mentioned, by men addressing me by name, but my greatest surprise was when one Sunday I rode out across the veldt with a friend to call upon an Englishman.

"I've heard of Mr Ganthony," he said, on being introduced; "yes, and seen his face somewhere.

Ah! I know," hurrying off, as though inspired by a sudden recollection, to the rear of his premises, gleefully returning with a torn piece of *Ally Sloper's Half Holiday*, in which was the sketch I saw for the first time, and which the proprietors have kindly permitted me to reprint here from the original block.

One of the young ladies of the company—who, by the way, never seem to understand that black people are men—thought it great fun to go to a Kaffir's kraal, peep in, and kiss her hand to the chief inside. He immediately came out *to buy her*, and was very much in earnest about it.

"No, thank you, I am not up for auction to-day."

"Three oxen?"

"Really very good of you, but——"

"Four oxen?"

"No, thanks, I'm not for sale."

"Five oxen?"

"No, let me go."

He let her go with a Zulu oath, and her friends, who had missed her, congratulated her on her safe return—which they had reason to do.

The servant girl trouble in England becomes more serious and more laughable in South Africa, where the servant girl is a boy, the boy a Kaffir, and his language Zulu.

It oftens happens that a newly-arrived English lady engages a "boy"—a six-foot Zulu—and, with her Kaffir dictionary in her hand, she gives him some instructions as to his domestic duties in his native language. What is her surprise to find that the Zulu suddenly becomes full of indignation, waves his hands about excitedly while pouring forth a torrent of Zulu dialect that no dictionary reference can keep pace with, and strides out of the house, never to enter it again.

She has mispronounced some Kaffir word, and called the poor fellow by some dreadful name, and so lost a good servant. As this has occurred several times, there is evidently some common household word that wants careful pronunciation.

My sister tells an amusing experience. At a swagger dinner party the hostess turned to the Kaffir boy at her elbow, and said—

"Bring the champagne."

The boy left, and the lady continued conversing with all around her, until she noticed the Kaffir again at her elbow, but no sign of the required poculent.

"Bring the wine, do you hear!"

The boy left demurely, and the hostess exerted herself to cover the delay in the arrival of the champagne. The boy again returned, and stood at her elbow. Seeing that something was wrong, and that it was hopeless to try and hide it from her friends, she said, "Excuse me" to her guests, and to the boy, "Now, why don't you bring the champagne?"

"No wine," replied the Kaffir.

"Nonsense; there is plenty of champagne."

"No. Me look at all bottles. All bottles say *extra dry*."

Naturally everyone was listening to the boy, and there was a roar of laughter as the frightened and puzzled Zulu was bundled out of the room and told to fetch the bottles.

"How stupid these boys are!" remarked the hostess, as the laughter subsided.

But is the Zulu stupid? With his limited knowledge of English why should he suppose a bottle marked "dry" should be full of liquid? I warrant when he gets with a few Zulu friends he has something to say about the irregularities of our vernacular.

The most remarkable sight in Cape Town is the Saturday morning open-air market, which is held on the space on "the parade," off Darling Street, where everybody who is not anybody repairs with anything he wants to barter or sell.

To say the articles which are offered are second-hand is to convey an imperfect idea of their antiquity. Upright pianos, sewing machines, guns, dogs, stools, chairs, beds—in fact, everything used by human beings is to be found covering the acres of open ground under the shadow of the Table Mountain.

Some years ago, Phillips asked a friend of mine to put a few hundred pounds into a sweepstake scheme, but my friend declined, not caring for gambling. To-day Mr Phillips is living in a fine estate in the South of England, in receipt of a large income from his idea, which now keeps several clerks in constant employment.

A lady engaged a "boy" in September, at the end of which month, when paid, he was satisfied, but at the end of October he demurred.

"Thirty days—not thirty-one days," he said.

"Don't be foolish," replied the lady, who did what any educated English lady would do under the circumstances—broke out into poetry, repeating the time-honoured lyric—

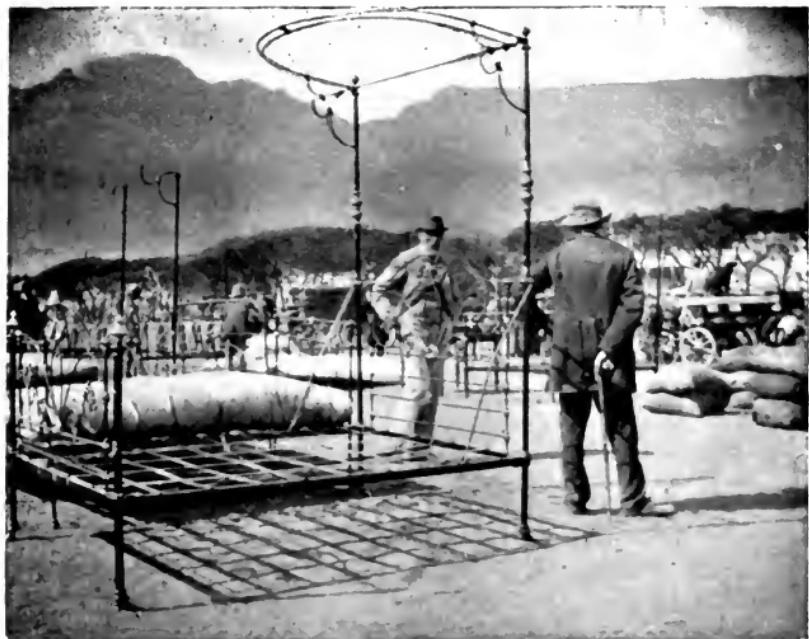
Thirty days hath September, etc. etc.

The Zulu, however, wanted pay, not poetry.

"No—no month thirty-one day—all month thirty day. Your month thirty day—then thirty-one—then thirty-two. No; me don't stop here."

This lady also complained of the stupidity of her boy; but the Zulu knew of no month other than the lunar month, and naturally thought he was being cheated.

AMATEUR PORTRAITURE.



Cape Town Open-air Market.



The Author getting Copy for his Articles in *The Sketch*.



I was at an afternoon tea in Johannesburg where we had a dignified gossip about current literature, of which we felt rather proud, when an apparition came into the middle of the room.

Our hostess had told the boy to let her know when the kettle was boiling. Her husband, a man of generous impulses, had that morning given the boy two soiled white dress ties for which he had no further use. The Kaffir hadn't the least idea what they were for, except, perhaps, that they were in some way connected with festive occasions, and, evidently considering that the afternoon tea was a fitting opportunity for wearing them, he fastened them round his head—letting the bands cross his forehead, while the bows he coquettishly arranged over his ears. This occupied him until the kettle boiled, when he took it off the fire with a stick, and with it walked into the drawing-room to show us that he was dressed, and that the kettle was boiling. The Kaffir boy with the white dress ties across his black head, a sack round his loins, and a sooty kettle at the end of a stick, which he held in his hands, was a sight to upset our gravity and take the dignity out of our proceedings.

My sister is rather near-sighted, and, in order to prepare for an entertainment, usually asks for extra candles on her dressing table. She told her bedroom boy as she passed him to let her have plenty of candles in her room, and later on, believing she was speaking to the same boy, she told another. There is a strong family likeness in these boys, and especially towards evening; meeting them on the steps or round the hotel it is possible to confuse one with the other. Anxious to secure sufficient light, she reminded, as she imagined, the same boy, but in reality told several. Rushing to her room to dress

she only found one candle, which was alight on the dressing table. She rang and said to the Kaffir who came in, "I want more candles."

The boy bent his body with laughter.

"What are you laughing at?—quick, more candles."

The Kaffir left and brought in another boy.

"Oh, you are the one. I want more candles."

They both bowed their bodies in laughter, and, leaving, brought in another.

He also laughed, but at the same time pointed to the bed behind her, where they had piled every candle they could lay their hands upon.

Every time I passed the boy who did my room he raised his hand and said "Ko-as!" Not understanding what he meant I asked him.

"Me tink him nice bass."

"Do you mean me?" my modesty questioned.

"Yes, uhg! (indicating moustache) uhg! Ko-as!"

Ko-as, I found, meant chief. That boy believed in me and would have done anything for me. I wish to goodness men of influence and wealth had the same correct views of my worth.

I gave him five shillings one day; he at once retired and we lost his services.

One night at a ball I was puzzled by a clinking accompaniment to the music at the piano. I found they had got a German prisoner from the gaol, who was allowed to play for them on the understanding that he was *chained to the piano*.

After sketching the outline of a corrugated iron prison, I found by the time I arranged my colour box that the prison had moved or I had mis-drawn it. As I thought this unlikely I watched it, and saw that it did move. The prisoners inside being thirsty, and not being able to leave, had lifted it a few inches

and were carrying it to the whisky bar a little distance away. When they got close they had their drinks through the small window, afterwards taking their prison back as near as they could to its former position. When the governor heard of it he said, "Not a bad idea; I can make these chaps mend the road now;" which they do, the portion under repair being also under the roof of their movable dwelling.

The passage home from South Africa was made in delightful weather. The sand collected in the rigging, carried there from the desert of Sahara by a wind which made us feel ill.

I became friendly with a tall, good-looking fellow on board who took a great interest in photography. In my cabin, when chatting about the passengers, I said, "Nobody seems to know which is Lord Annaly. At my table they said that gloomy man in the check trousers was he, but I said that you looked to me more like a nobleman than any of them," at which Lord Annaly laughed heartily at the correctness of my guess, and revealed to me his identity.

I found plenty to do on board, as I prepared a lecture on South Africa—which I afterwards gave at Queen's Hall, Richmond Theatre, etc.—did a portrait of Lady Annaly in water colours, and wrote the plot of "A Brace of Partridges," the strange history of which comedy will conclude this book.

I saw nothing from the sky but one hailstorm, which swept across the veldt, for which I needed an umbrella or mackintosh from the day I left in July to the day I returned to England in November. Apparently the rain and fog had been waiting for me to convince me that for gloomy skies, mud, wet and meteorological depression, there is no place like home.

"A Brace of Partridges."

I HAVE always rather avoided writing plays, because I saw the misery and disappointment they brought certain friends who had written, but a mistake I made in confusing the brothers Goldmann with one another when in Johannesburg appeared so funny that the idea rather took hold of me, and, "for want of other idleness," I put it in rough dramatic form on the passage home.

I mentioned the subject to W. S. Penley, walking back one night from a Savage Club Lodge dinner, with the result that he took an interest in the idea, which I read to him a few nights later at the Globe Theatre. He said, "If I couldn't make a success of that I'd eat my hat," and gave me some good hints about it, but, at the same time, pointed out that the part was not suited to him. His encouragement caused me to put a little more work into it, and finish the first act.

Passing the Vaudeville I sent in my card to Weedon Grossmith, and was at once admitted.

"Do you happen to want a play, Weedon?"

"I am obliged to close my theatre because I can't get one."

Here was news for the great unacted—a manager closing his theatre because he couldn't get a play!

I was tempted to reveal the nature of the crime I had committed, with the result that I lunched by appointment with Mr and Mrs Weedon (Miss May Palfry), who make as delightful an audience as an author can wish for. They were charmed with the act which I had completed, but the rest was only in the rough. Weedon cycled back with me from his house in Mayfair as far as Shepherd's Bush, discussing the play, when we repaired to what I should like to

call a "wayside inn," but which was really a "pub," where the subject was continued. I mention our interview on wheels because dodging cabs on a high road is the last place—if it be a place within the meaning of the Act—where one would suppose the acceptance of a London play would be discussed.

After our discussion on cycles, I put the acts II. and III. into shape, and gave the whole play to Weedon Grossmith one night at the Savage Club just as he was leaving in a hansom. Next day a letter came from Scotland Yard, saying that some manuscript with my name and address had been found in a cab and would I call and claim it? I went to town, when they handed me "*A Brace of Partridges*."

Whenever I met Weedon he rather avoided me, as I naturally made the most pointed inquiries about the play, which he evaded answering, until, after a few days, he admitted having read the second act of the revised version, at which admission I could scarcely help bursting out laughing.

Meanwhile, Weedon hunted his house from attic to basement for the missing play, till his brother George said, "You've left it in a cab; go and inquire at Scotland Yard." When he did so, he learnt that I had had it back the day after I gave it him.

The leading part was for a "light," and not an "eccentric comedian," so he eventually declined it.

I doubt whether I should ever have done anything more with the play if Mr Crandon Gill (whose firm published several books of mine) had not happened to see it. He complimented me upon it, and backed up his flattery by offering me £200 for a half share, which I accepted. By putting more time on to it, I made it what I think I am justified in calling it, an *acceptable play*.

I had another's interests to consider now, and it was wonderful with what business push I found myself possessed. This soon resulted in my getting the play accepted at the Strand Theatre by a man who was reported to be a millionaire. It was put in rehearsal to follow "Teddy's Wives," a Fergus Hume-rous Play, but the members of the company seemed in a state of disquietude, which I could not understand till I learnt that those who were also in the evening bill had not received any wages.

I next found that a bailiff was in the box office, and, at the same time, discovered that my play was to be used to see if an immediate success would not save the millionaire (!) from the Bankruptcy Court. As this was not giving the play a fair chance I had to try and get it away, and as the time the management had to produce it was getting short, affairs grew rather exciting. On the last week, Mr Tressahar, our light comedian, quarrelled with the manager, and Mr Sydney Brough was appealed to to take the part, but Mr Terry would not let him as he wanted him for "Love in Idleness." So it happened that, before anyone else could be found, the contract had expired by the effluxion of time, and the play was saved.

I next received a letter from the late acting manager of the Strand, who had read the play and seen it rehearsed, saying that he had a theatre and a "backer," and would like to see me about producing it.

I was introduced by him to another "millionaire," or rather a millionaire in embryo, as I was told that he did not come into his property for a month or so, when he came of age. The young gentleman, whose name I withhold for the sake of his relations, in consequence of the painful tragedy which terminated our negotiations, had married a beautiful American

actress, with whom he came to my house on a visit. I read the play to them and they accepted it.

I called by invitation upon the young couple at the apartments, Jermyn Street. Being a fashionable locality, I was surprised to find a dingy hall, with a showy, dilapidated looking-glass, a knock-kneed hat stand, and stair carpets which I should be ashamed of having in a hen run.

I was shown after much ceremony into their bedroom. This, again, was characterised by the cheerless, frayed style of garniture which had greeted me from the moment I arrived. The window had been broken at some remote period, and the lasting powers of brown paper and paste subjected to prolonged experiment. The lady's fast appeared to have been broken also, for a portion of cold sausage on a greasy plate, and the expiring bubbles on a recently drained tumbler which had contained porter, bore silent testimony to the fact that millionaires do eat.

In the bedroom, among the visible live stock, were a lawyer whom I knew, and a Jew money lender whom I did not know. When I entered, the lady introduced me to them in a state of nervous excitement, and no wonder, for, as I learnt a few days after, her youthful husband, whom she found hadn't a farthing, had been arrested and taken to — Prison. She entreated me in her bewilderment and misery to give a musical sketch, and I don't suppose that I ever attempted to amuse a more incongruous audience, or had a more inappropriate time suggested to attempt to do so, than when I sat at that bedroom piano in Jermyn Street, and sang to the Jew who had been swindled out of his loan, the wife who had been swindled out of her life and womanhood, and the duped solicitor whose "little bit of law" had not saved him. When

I had finished I saw that my presence was an embarrassment, and I left.

When I called again the lady had all her trunks packed. I nailed up the last batch of her theatrical photographs for her in a box, and tied a label on to her bicycle, which, with her things, she was taking back to her home in America.

In the middle of completing the packing, with all the litter and straw covering the room, a double knock followed the last stroke of my hammer and a letter was brought up to the room. It was from her mother in America, full of tender solicitude respecting her future, advising mutual forbearance, trust, and love, which she read to me and then, with a gesture of impatient regret, crushed it in her hand as she looked round at the room and at what it signified.

When her husband was released from prison he followed her to America, where he blew his brains out in a New York hotel, the event being reported in the London papers under the title of "A Short and Wild Career."

I met Mr Lestocq, the dramatic agent, at the Green Room Club, and he asked me to let him have the play to read, which I did, with the result that he wrote back saying "that he was inclined to consider it a money-maker," and that he would accept the agency of it and try and place it.

I submitted it to Mr Playfair, who had Terry's Theatre, but he, or more likely the syndicate he represented, argued that "as a French play had been successful at the Vaudeville, they must have a French play," and, following this absurd process of reasoning, they lost a wholesome English play that would have brought them money, and reflected credit on the producers, in order to insult the public by asking it to witness a lewd and revolting piece which ran three

nights. As long as plays are not judged on their own merits, but accepted because some other similar piece has done something else, it always will be thus. The brooding step-son of King Claudius was right when he said, "The play's the thing."

At a performance which I gave for copyright purposes at the Richmond Theatre some amusing incidents occurred.

Bertie Terry wired me at the last moment that he could not read a part for me as he had promised, which, of course, put me in a flutter. The company had arrived, and a number of my friends, who had paid in order that we might conform with the law, had removed the covers and taken their seats in the stalls. At my wits' end to find a substitute, I looked about for the man who had been engaged to pull up the curtain, and saw him, as I thought, smoking a pipe on the steps of the theatre looking at the river.

"Would you," I asked, hurriedly, "be good enough to read a part in my play this afternoon?—you can easily do it with what you have to do."

"Oh, I have nothing much to do—were those pretty girls actresses—eh—yes—why the devil shouldn't I? Where's the part? I'm a bit of an Irving at private theatricals. How long can I have to study it?—ten minutes?—the deuce—I'll do it—done a lot of this sort of thing in India."

How these stage hands do chatter, I muttered to myself, as I waited impatiently while he leisurely knocked the ashes out of his pipe on the railings of the theatre and followed me. I gave him the part and hurried up on to the stage, where I found a man in his shirt sleeves who asked if he should lower the curtain. I told him that he had better, as this arrangement would leave the other man to attend altogether to his part. The last addition to my

company not only did his part capitally but made himself particularly agreeable to the ladies, telling them, as I heard afterwards, a lot of his experiences all over the world.

When the play was over, I hurried off to thank the man who had saved the situation, and, with my hand in my pocket, asked him how I could repay him.

"Repay me! nonsense. Never enjoyed an afternoon better in my life—don't see such a lot of handsome girls every day in India. You go and look after your friends, I must get back to dinner. My card—glad to have met you—good-day." On the card was written:—

MAJOR-GENERAL FELL TATHERS,

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The Barons,

Twickenham.

When I recrossed the stage the man I now knew to be the real curtain raiser was putting on his coat prior to going home.

With regard to the play, thinking that I should get a candid, and not a candied, opinion from a child, I took a little girl I knew on one side, and asked her what she thought of it. She replied—

"Well, I think it's a regular beastly play. They read their parts, there is no band, no gas, and the seats are all covered with rags."

When I gave the cue for Lord Wallerton's entrance, a part Mr Baynham, the elocutionist, was to read, there was no response, which caused me to interpolate a few impromptu remarks to what were literally my "kind friends in front" as follows:—

"Baynham's a nice fellow. He not only promises

faithfully to come, and doesn't, but asks for the part and keeps it——"

I was continuing when I became conscious of suppressed laughter in front, and of wild, and, to me, unmeaning pantomime at the wings, caused by my friends trying to let me know that the man whom I had been abusing was on the stage standing behind me. He had come in by another entrance, and I had concluded that he had not kept his promise.

Finally, Mr H. Reeves Smith, whose clever performances in "Sweet Lavender," "Charley's Aunt," etc., will be remembered with pleasure by playgoers, secured the comedy, and, though advised by friends to have nothing to do with it, acted on his own judgment and scored an emphatic success in the provinces. The piece will be produced in London at the Strand Theatre about the time these pages see the light. Since the play was settled for, we have been besieged by people who have plays exactly like it. Some, fortunately for me, have never been shown to a living soul, while others have been played in America for years—curiously, without any record of performance.

Everybody claims to have made some suggestion which has made the play the success it has so far proved to be. One agent to whom I lent it not only kept it but claimed an absolute ownership, which he attempted to enforce at law, though he had neither paid, nor signed, anything, and had no more right to it than the man in the moon.

The man under whose excellent judgment and direction I was able to improve the play was the man who first saw its merits, Mr H. Reeves Smith. His discernment and his solid method of analysis argue well for his future career as a manager.

With a capital little company consisting of Mrs

Charles Maltby, Miss Allestree, Miss A. L. Aumonier, and Messrs Charles Lander, Fred Everill, Cecil Thornbury, Duncan Tovey, Leslie Thomson, Peter Darwin, and H. Reeves Smith, the play was produced on the 15th November, 1897, at the pretty County Theatre, Kingston-on-Thames, to a packed house. It went with roars of laughter from beginning to end, with two and three curtains after each act. This was more gratifying as I had not half a dozen personal friends in the theatre. When it was over, there was a general call for the author, which became persistent when Mr Reeves Smith, addressing the audience, said I was in the house. I was, as a matter of fact, outside looking after the carriage. Our manager seized me by the arm and hurried me past the audience through the private door on to the stage, where I found the company assembled. One took my hat, another my overcoat, and Reeves Smith, seeing me, caught me by the hand and dragged me before the footlights. The dreaded critics said that I "responded with graceful bows." As I did so, I met the gaze of my wife looking up at me from the stalls, and a vista passed before me of the struggles we had gone through and the audience were forgotten. Then I shook my friend's hand, which I found I had retained in mine, and retired to receive the even more delightful congratulations of the company who had interpreted my work so well.

And now, dear reader—and you don't mind me calling you dear?—the act drop has been rung down; the National Anthem has been played; the comedy has been acted, and the book is finished.

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